

# COUNTRY LIFE®

OCTOBER 12, 2016

EVERY WEEK

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Michael Morpurgo: why the countryside is vital for children

PLUS Queen Victoria's love life, Caravaggio, cooking fungi and London property focus



# BRIGHTS OF NETTLEBED

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Very few traditional weaving families with the required knowledge and skill remain, meaning sourcing rugs of this quality can be extremely difficult and for the majority, not viable. However, we believe in supporting the traditions and making the additional effort to present unrivalled products to our clients.

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Photographed in situ at Highclere Castle



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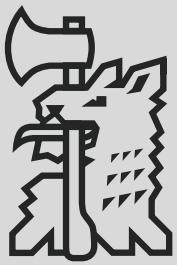
## Fitzroy Square, Fitzrovia W1

**A Grade I listed Robert Adam mansion house and adjoining mews house**

An exquisite five storey mansion house situated on one of London's most prestigious garden squares. Of classical Adam design, the house provides voluminous room proportions with grand ceiling heights of up to 4m. The property encompasses a roof terrace and courtyard garden, adjoining mews house and garage with parking for two cars. Planning has been granted for swimming pool and lift. Approximately 966.5 sq m (10,403 sq ft). Freehold.

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## An unrivalled view of West Country property

### *New Blandford office extends our lead*

Across Dorset, Somerset, Devon and Cornwall, Jackson-Stops & Staff has more offices than any other quality national agent, giving us a clearer view of the market and making us more visible to national and international buyers.

For more information, please call Simon Milledge MRICS at Blandford Forum, or your nearest Jackson-Stops & Staff office.

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## Eaton Place, Belgravia SW1

**Exceptional interior designed four bedroom en suite apartment**

Sloane Square 0.6 mile, Elizabeth Street 0.1 mile

A larger than average four bedroom en suite apartment featuring substantial room sizes and offering unique living spaces with impressive ceiling heights. With eye-catching colour palettes, exquisite interiors, the latest home automation systems and exceptional outside spaces. Grade II listed.

**Guide price: £8,700,000**

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# *Idyllic residential country estate*

BLACKHAM, EAST SUSSEX

Royal Tunbridge Wells: 6 miles, Gatwick Airport: 18 miles, Central London: 35 miles

Grade II listed farmhouse with advanced plans for enlargement, converted Oast House, cottage, commercial units, superb views, long private driveway and consent for entrance lodge, significant estate income, farmland and woodland. EPCs = C-F

About 200 acres | Guide £4.75 million



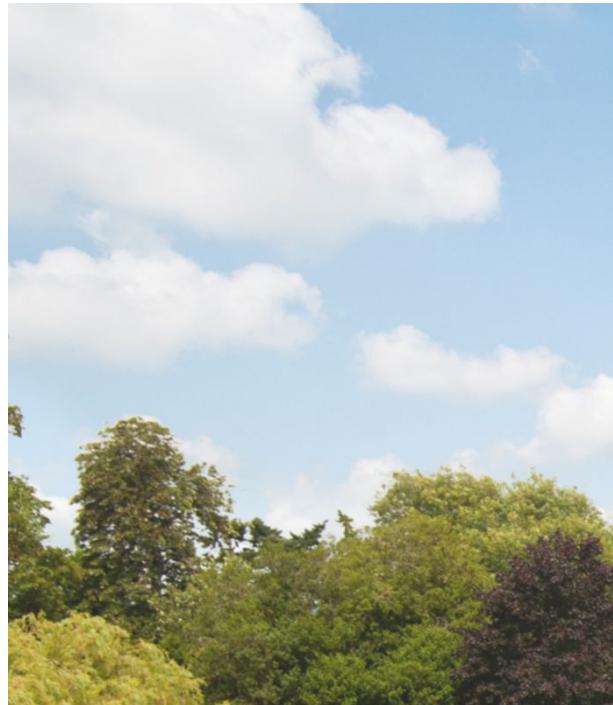
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Complete Land Management  
**01892 770339**  
mark@c-l-m.co.uk

Alex Lawson  
Savills London Farms & Estates  
**020 3504 6596**  
alawson@savills.com

Chris Spofforth  
Savills Haywards Heath  
**01444 849560**  
cspofforth@savills.com

**savills**

## Berkshire, Holyport



**Period grandeur within thirty miles of Central London.**

Maidenhead: 3 miles | Paddington from 25 mins | Windsor: 4 miles | Henley-on-Thames: 11.5 miles

Heathrow: 14 miles | Central London: 28 miles

6 Reception rooms | Kitchen/breakfast room | Master bedroom suite with 2 bedrooms and 2 dressing rooms

6 Further bedrooms (3 ensuite) | Office | 2-Bed lodge | 2-Bed cottage | Indoor swimming pool | Stables

Manège | 1km horse exercise track | Beautiful gardens with lake | Paddocks | Woodland

**About 20.75 acres**



"An historic country house set in  
beautifully laid out gardens."

**James Mackenzie**

Country Department | 020 3642 4591

**Nicola Craddock**

Country Department | 020 3642 4591

# WH

## THE WHITE HOUSE

HIGHGATE N6

ONE OF THE FINEST HOUSES TO COME TO THE MARKET  
IN MANY YEARS. "A LONDON COUNTRY ESTATE"



This outstanding Grade II listed house was built in 1842 with later additions and is one of two stuccoed villas located on a discreet private road.

Formerly the home of pianist Sir Clifford Curzon, this wonderful family home extends to over 9,440 sq ft (877 sq mts) predominantly on 2 floors and still retains a plethora of original features and embellishments, with exceptionally bright and spacious accommodation.

The house commands a 167' frontage and is set in grounds that extend to over 1.45 acres, which include a 2 bedroom guest house, swimming pool enclosure, an 'all-weather' tennis court, and an integral double garage alongside private parking for 5 to 6 vehicles.



OnTheMarket.com

### TERMS

**Tenure:** Freehold | Sole Selling Agents  
Guide Price Upon Application



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## IMPRESSIVE DOUBLE FRONTED VICTORIAN FAMILY HOME

**WOODLANDS ROAD, SW13 £5,400,000 FREEHOLD**

Located at the end of one of Barnes' most prestigious residential cul-de-sacs, this imposing double fronted Victorian house is ideal for country lovers and dog walkers with woods, common and Richmond Park nearby. There is extremely spacious and well decorated accommodation, together with a large garden and off street parking for several cars; the ideal home for family living.

Seven bedrooms | four bathrooms | dressing room | lounge | sitting room | kitchen | 31' conservatory | utility room | cloakroom | 145' garden | off street parking | EPC rating E

**020 8255 0088** | Donovan Kelly  
[dkelly@winkworth.co.uk](mailto:dkelly@winkworth.co.uk)

**Winkworth**



# *Resplendent Cotswold grandeur*

GRITTLETON, WILTSHIRE

Bath: 16 miles, Bristol: 24 miles, Heathrow Airport: 76 miles, Central London: 94 miles

Formerly a school, events and wedding venue. Grade II\* listed country house with potential for alternative uses. Grade II listed former stable courtyard and coach house now converted and extended to accommodate the educational study centre. Manager's house, gate lodge, cottage, landscaped formal gardens and grounds. Manager's cottage EPC = E

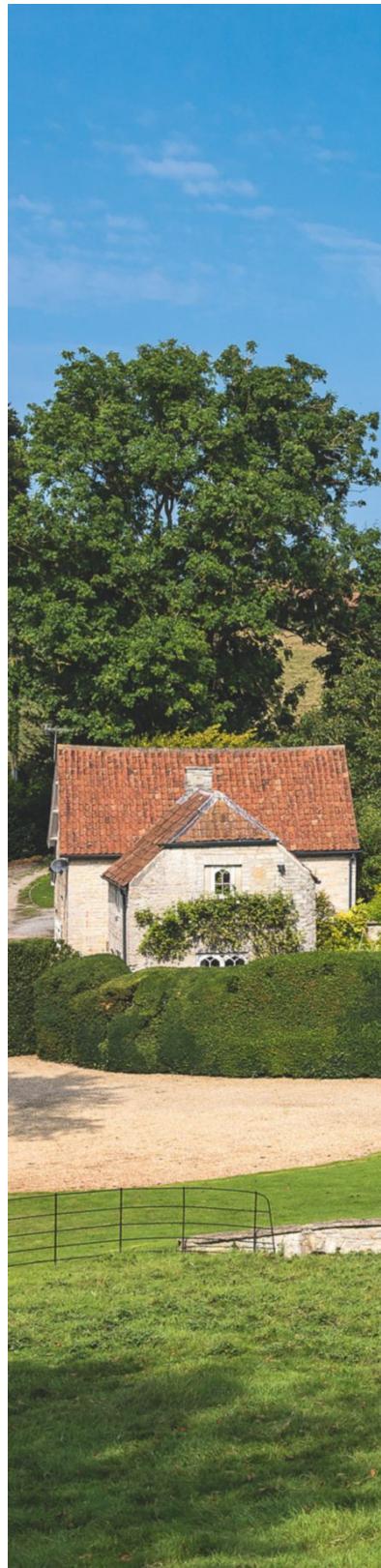
About 38 acres | Guide £5 million (whole)



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Savills London Country Department  
**020 3504 4204**  
jwalker@savills.com

Gary Witham  
Savills Hotel & Institutional Agency  
**020 3504 4140**  
gwitham@savills.com

**savills**



# *Beautiful parkland setting*

NR SOMERTON, SOMERSET

Somerton: 3 miles, A303: 3 miles, Castle Cary: 9 miles (London Paddington from 90 minutes)

4 reception rooms, master bedroom suite with dressing room, 8 further bedrooms and 5 further bathrooms, courtyard with 4 cottages, extensive outbuildings, swimming pool within walled garden, orchard, paddocks, parkland with brook.

About 21 acres | Guide £4 million



Thomas Shuttleworth  
Savills London Country Department  
**020 3504 4341**  
tshuttleworth@savills.com

Lindsay Cuthill  
Savills London Country Department  
**020 3504 5575**  
lcuthill@savills.com





# *Exceptional rural investment*

MICHELDEVER STATION, HAMPSHIRE

Winchester: 7.5 miles, Basingstoke: 13 miles (London Waterloo from 55 minutes)

Substantial let estate in central Hampshire with major strategic development opportunities, about 3,990 acres of arable and grassland subject to tenancies, about 142 acres of woodland, about 95 acres of additional grazing/amenity & misc, 24 residential dwellings.

About 4,227 acres | Price on application



Giles Wordsworth  
Savills Farms & Estates  
**020 3504 6906**  
gwordswo@ savills.com

George Syrett  
Savills Winchester  
**01962 659789**  
gsyrett@savills.com





## CLINK STREET, LONDON SE1

Fronting the River Thames, this rare warehouse space offers stunning river and City skyline views. Offering 286.5 sq m (3,000 sq ft) of living space with potential to extend the unconverted basement area, subject to planning. EPC = C  
**Guide £3.8 million**

Laura Laws  
Savills Wapping  
**020 3504 4105**  
llaws@savills.com



## BEAMINSTER, DORSET

Superb modern country house surrounded by its own land, 5 bedrooms with en suite bath/shower rooms, 5 reception rooms, 2 bedroom cottage, outbuildings with double garage, stable, gardens and grounds. EPC = B  
**About 81 acres | Guide £2.9 million**

Simon Neville-Jones  
Savills Wimborne  
**01202 069915**  
snevilejones@savills.com





# *Wonderful Grade II listed Chelsea house*

CHEYNE WALK, LONDON SW10

Grade II listed late Georgian house benefiting from extraordinarily grand lateral reception room, double drawing room, dining room, library, sitting room, TV room, potential for 4/5 bedrooms, gym, wine cellars, 60 ft garden, 3 garages, 746.4 sq m (8,034 sq ft).

Freehold | Guide £17.95 million

Noel De Keyzer  
Savills Knightsbridge  
**020 3504 4179**  
[ndekeyzer@savills.com](mailto:ndekeyzer@savills.com)

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## *An exquisite Georgian house*

BETTON, SHROPSHIRE

M6 (J15): 12.6 miles, Nantwich: 14 miles, Stafford: 23 miles

3 principal reception rooms, orangery and kitchen, 7 principal bedrooms, 3 secondary residences, traditional outbuildings, formal gardens and organic pastureland.

About 16.7 acres | Guide £1.6 million

Tony Morris-Eyton  
Savills West Midlands  
**01952 239510**  
amorris-eyton@savills.com

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## *Grade II\* listed house*

MARKET DRAYTON, SHROPSHIRE

M6 (J15): 22 miles, Stoke-on-Trent: 25 miles,  
Stafford: 27 miles

4 reception rooms, 8 bedrooms, 5 bathrooms,  
garage, land and paddock, period (pre 1945), outbuilding/  
office, swimming pool, tennis court and cottage, approx  
11,635 sq ft, 6 further cottages available by negotiation

| about 64.5 acres | EPCs: Cottages = B-F

Guide £2.75 million

Tony Morris-Eyton  
Savills West Midlands  
**01952 239510**  
amorris-eyton@savills.com

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## Chedworth, Gloucestershire

### The complete Cotswold country house experience

Cirencester 7 miles, Cheltenham 11 miles, Kemble 14 miles (London Paddington 80 minutes)

Beautifully presented period house in sought-after village. Extensively modernised throughout. Mark Wilkinson kitchen/breakfast room, 3 reception rooms. Master bedroom suite, further 5 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms. Coach house for garaging and 44 ft open-plan space above, swimming pool, hot tub, tennis court, formal gardens, paddocks. EPC: D. About 13 acres.

**Guide price: £3,350,000**

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## Rutland Gardens, Knightsbridge SW7

An impressive six bedroom house with lift on a private road

Hyde Park 0.1 mile, Harrods 0.3 mile, Heathrow Airport 17 miles

Ashburton House is discreetly located in a private, gated cul-de-sac, with a 24 hour security guard and parking (by separate arrangement), opposite Hyde Park. 6 bedrooms, 6 bathrooms, 2 reception rooms, dining room, kitchen/breakfast room, study, utility room, lift, roof terrace with hot tub. EPC: D. Approximately 471.9 sq m (5,080 sq ft). Freehold.

Guide price: £13,800,000

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## Lancaster Gate, Hyde Park W2

**Exceptional apartment with a spacious terrace overlooking Hyde Park**

A recently refurbished second floor Grade II listed period apartment offering fantastic ceiling heights and an abundance of natural light. 3 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, reception/dining room, Bulthaup kitchen, sunroom, terrace, underfloor heating, air conditioning and heating system, lift access, day porter. Approximately 158 sq m (1,692 sq ft).

**Guide price: £4,950,000**

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## Near Gordes, Luberon

### A spectacular residence in Provence

In an area of outstanding natural beauty with unparalleled views and privacy, this Mas of exceptional proportions and character has been the subject of an exhaustive reconstruction delivering a home of exceptional international standards. 4 main reception rooms, 7 bedrooms, 7 bathrooms. Cinema room. Guest house and staff annexe. Pool house and garage. Tennis court. About 13 hectares.

KnightFrank.com  
[mark.harvey@knightfrank.com](mailto:mark.harvey@knightfrank.com)  
+44 20 7861 5034



**La Zagaleta, Marbella, Spain**

Guide price: €4,950,000



**Royal Westmoreland, Barbados**

Guide price: US\$4,500,000



**Château d'Oex, Switzerland**

Guide price: CHF 850,000



**Miami, USA**

Guide price: US\$7,600,000



**Algarve, Portugal**

Guide price: €2,500,000



Santa Ponsa, Mallorca, Spain

Guide price: €3,850,000



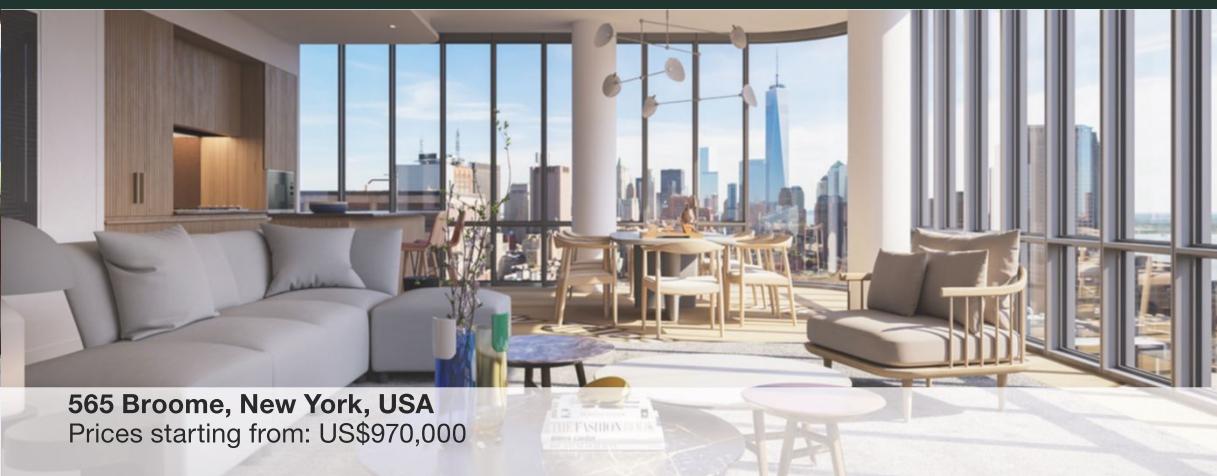
Santa Gertrudis, Ibiza, Spain

Guide price: €2,950,000



Tuscany, Italy

Guide price: €3,000,000



565 Broome, New York, USA

Prices starting from: US\$970,000

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Tortola, British Virgin Islands

Guide price: US\$5,950,000



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# Luxury Collection



## **USA – Greenwich, Connecticut**

Majestic 13 acre estate. Exquisitely designed and impeccably renovated chateau on 13 beautiful acres. Aquatic centre with 60 ft pool. Seven bedrooms, 9 baths. Four-car garage.

US \$19,250,000 HOULIHAN LAWRENCE REAL ESTATE

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## **USA – Bronxville, New York**

Magnificent slate and stone English Manor on 2 acres renovated in 2007. A masterpiece of modern elegance combined with family warmth and comfort.

US \$13,750,000 HOULIHAN LAWRENCE REAL ESTATE

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## **USA - St. Petersburg, Florida**

Now under construction, ONE St. Petersburg is a luxury condominium community featuring 41 storeys, 253 residences and 40,000 sq ft of amenities, to be completed late 2018.

From US \$600,000 SMITH & ASSOCIATES REAL ESTATE

**001 727 240 3840** [www.smithandassociates.com](http://www.smithandassociates.com)



## **USA – John's Island, Florida**

Exceptional golf course home with 6,000+ sq ft, living room with fireplace, gourmet kitchen, family room, spacious master suite and impeccable finishes. Beautiful lanai with pool overlooking the fairways.

US \$4,500,000 DALE SORENSEN REAL ESTATE, INC

**001 772 532 0010** [www.MatildeSorensen.com](http://www.MatildeSorensen.com)



## **USA – Orchid Island, Florida**

Elegantly relaxed custom home gracefully sited on expansive double lot overlooking the 4th green. Beautifully appointed and comprised of the finest custom details.

US \$4,500,000 DALE SORENSEN REAL ESTATE, INC

**001 772 532 0010** [www.MatildeSorensen.com](http://www.MatildeSorensen.com)



## **USA – Orchid Island, Florida**

Architecturally distinct oceanfront home with 166 ft of beautiful shoreline. Four bed/4 bath main house + separate guest house, elevator, poolside cabana, expansive lanais and balconies overlooking the ocean.

US \$7,990,000 DALE SORENSEN REAL ESTATE, INC

**001 772 532 0010** [www.MatildeSorensen.com](http://www.MatildeSorensen.com)



## **USA – Far Hills, New Jersey**

Stunning 2007 Georgian brick colonial on approx. 18 acres. Barn, pool, tennis court and cottage. Designer kitchen and luxurious master suite. Four fireplaces. Custom panelled library and family room. Extraordinary millwork. Approx 45 miles to NYC.

US \$3,995,000 GERRY JO CRANMER ATTURPIN REAL ESTATE

**001 908 234 9100** [www.turpinrealtors.com](http://www.turpinrealtors.com)



## **USA – Far Hills, New Jersey**

French country-style manor poised on approx 10.5 acres with views. Includes 6 beds, 9 baths, a four-car garage, pool and tennis court, extensive landscaping, and a four-stall barn. Pond, stunning countryside views. Approx 45 miles to NYC.

US \$5,400,000 GERRY JO CRANMER ATTURPIN REAL ESTATE

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## **USA – Bernardsville Boro, New Jersey**

Restrained c.1926 French Norman with formal gardens, pool and pool pavilion. 5 beds, 5.2 baths, service quarters, guest cottage and iconic stone water tower. Long views. Approx. 40 miles to NYC.

US \$5,800,000 GERRY JO CRANMER ATTURPIN REAL ESTATE

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**SPAIN – Villanueva Mesia, Granada**

Beautiful 5 bedroom farmhouse set among its own olive groves, renovated to the highest of specifications with terraces, enormous pool and large living area – all within 25 minutes of Granada airport.

€1,100,000      BOON VILLAS COSTA TROPICAL  
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**SPAIN – Salobreña, Granada**

A palatial 5 bedroom villa with stunning aspect. Traditional in appearance while internally modern with large kidney shaped pool, extensive grounds, stunning sea and mountain views – all within 45 minutes of Granada / Málaga Airport.

€1,450,000      BOON VILLAS COSTA TROPICAL  
**0034 958 610 013**      [www.boonvillas.com](http://www.boonvillas.com)


**SPAIN – Salobreña, Granada**

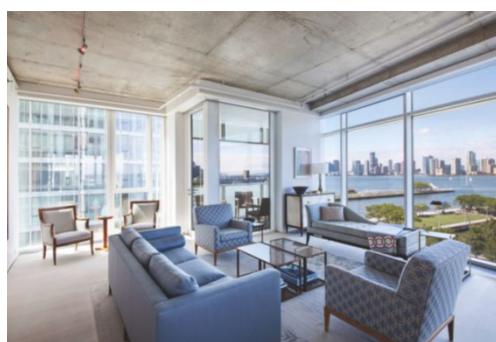
Four bedroom contemporary villa set in magnificent mature gardens with breathtaking sea/mountain views, large pool and undeveloped separate guest accommodation – all within 50 minutes of Granada/Málaga airport.

€1,400,000      BOON VILLAS COSTA TROPICAL  
**0034 958 610 013**      [www.boonvillas.com](http://www.boonvillas.com)


**USA – TriBeCa, NY**

Spectacular; sun-flooded penthouse oasis with Views, 2 landscaped terraces, 2 bedrooms and 2 baths occupying a full floor in a lovely boutique condominium. Contact Ivana Tagliamonte.

US \$5,495,000      HALSTEAD PROPERTY, LLC  
**001 212 381 6575**      [www.halstead.com](http://www.halstead.com)


**USA – West Village, NY**

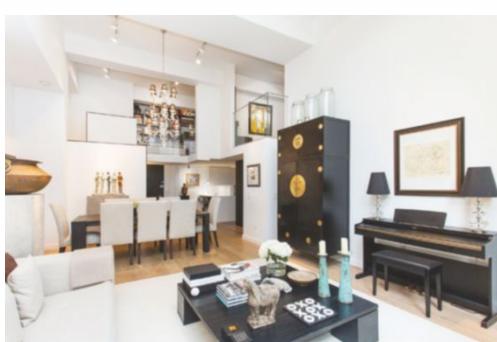
Modern three bedroom, 3.5 bath, duplex home with spectacular river views in celebrated Richard Meier Condominium. Contact Friedman Rosenthal Team.

US \$13,995,000      HALSTEAD PROPERTY, LLC  
**001 212 381 2379**      [www.halstead.com](http://www.halstead.com)


**USA – Upper West Side, New York**

Stunning 4 bedroom, 4 bath duplex. Just renovated. Superior finishes and high-end materials. Great light and views. 24-hour attended lobby. Contact Louise Phillips Forbes.

US \$6,250,000      HALSTEAD PROPERTY, LLC  
**001 212 381 3329**      [www.halstead.com](http://www.halstead.com)


**USA – Upper East Side, New York**

Park Avenue Court. Masterfully crafted 2 bedroom, 2 bath duplex – no expense was spared. Full service doorman condominium with concierge and state-of-the-art gym. Contact Astrid Pillay

US \$3,050,000      HALSTEAD PROPERTY, LLC  
**001 212 381 2262**      [www.halstead.com](http://www.halstead.com)


**USA – Upper West Side, New York**

Built 1910. Rarely available 25 ft wide townhouse with an elevator; a lovely south-facinggarden plus a basement. Single family or multi-unit. 11 baths. Contact Jill Sloane.

US \$11,975,000      HALSTEAD PROPERTY, LLC  
**001 212 381 2206**      [www.halstead.com](http://www.halstead.com)


**IRELAND – Baltimore, West Cork**

Ballylynch. Spectacular coastal property c. 3,000 sq ft on about 12 acres. Magnificent aspect over the inner Baltimore Harbour and offering complete privacy and flexible accommodation.

€650,000      CHARLES MCCARTHY ESTATE AGENTS  
**00 353 28 21533**      [www.charlesmccarthy.com](http://www.charlesmccarthy.com)



### **WEST SUSSEX, Horsham**

A superb development of four contemporary, unique properties offering spacious and light accommodation with exceptional finish. 5-6 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms. EPC tbc.

£1.595m - £1.65m

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### **WARWICKSHIRE, Edge Hill**

A 4 bedroom detached country house with a British Horse Society approved equestrian centre, all set in approximately 8 acres.

£799,950-£850,000 PAUL CARR EXCLUSIVE & RURAL HOMES

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### **CORNWALL, between Portreath and Porthtowan**

Rurally located between the north coast villages of Portreath and Porthtowan and enjoying an elevated, south facing country vista is this renovated and modernised farmhouse in about 7 acres of grounds and formal gardens.

Guide price £750,000

MILLERSON

**01872 277794**

[www.millerson.com](http://www.millerson.com)



### **CAMBRIDGESHIRE, Covington**

A fine example of an imposing Victorian residence, beautifully positioned amid over 3 acres of mature grounds. Master and guest rooms both with en suite.

£1.425m

PETER LANE & PARTNERS

**01480 860400**

[www.peterlane.co.uk](http://www.peterlane.co.uk)

### **CAMBRIDGESHIRE, Great Raveley**

Beautifully positioned semi-rural farmhouse enjoying stunning countryside views and mature grounds of approximately 5 acres, gardens, paddock, 5 stables and a selection of agricultural barns.

£650,000

PETER LANE & PARTNERS

**01480 414800**

[www.peterlane.co.uk](http://www.peterlane.co.uk)

### **CAMBRIDGESHIRE, St Ives**

An exceptional 5 bedroom townhouse with river mooring to the rear and an independent 3 bedroom cottage within the grounds. Offered with no forward chain.

Guide price £960,000

PETER LANE & PARTNERS

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### **OXFORDSHIRE, Curbridge**

Delightful period home with a stunning interior; combining style, quality and character. Five bedrooms, 4 reception rooms, garaging, gardens and panoramic countryside views. Birthplace of Thomas Beecham in 1820.

£795,000

MARTYN R COX & CO

**01993 779020**

[www.martyncox.com](http://www.martyncox.com)

### **NORTHAMPTONSHIRE, Newton Bromswold**

A substantial former farmhouse requiring modernisation. Mature gardens, outbuilding, garage and adjoining paddock. Also available range of farm buildings and 92 acres of pasture land.

Guide price £700,000

BLETSOES

### **SUFFOLK, Southwold**

Centrally located, former Victorian industrial building transformed into a contemporary 3 bedroom, 3 bathroom house with a south-facing secluded terrace and integral parking.

£785,000

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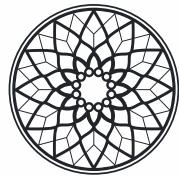


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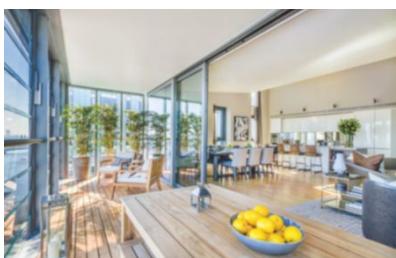
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## Tillington, West Sussex

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guide price

4 bed Grade II listed 16th Century farmhouse with annexe & paddock set in 1.5 acres.  
3 receptions, 3 bathrooms & 1 bed annex.  
Contact: Midhurst office 01730 297954



## Everton, Hampshire

£825,000

Spacious, period detached house in a popular village. Offering flexible accommodation with annexe potential & a SW facing garden.  
Contact: Lymington office 01590 287956



## Pleasley Vale, Nottinghamshire

£1,100,000

6 bed barn conversion surrounded by countryside. 4 receptions, 5 bathrooms & an indoor swimming pool which opens onto gardens.  
Contact: West Bridgford office 0115 774 9003



## Felliscliffe, North Yorkshire

£695,000

A deceptively spacious detached family home ideally suited to those with equestrian interests, with approx. 5 acres of land.  
Contact: Harrogate office 01423 578944



## Wolvesnewtown, Monmouthshire

£1,195,000  
guide price

Superbly located period house set in 21 acres with ancillary accommodation & outbuildings all in a magical rural situation.  
Contact: Ledbury office 01531 577983



## Aldbrough St John, North Yorkshire

£550,000  
offers in region of

Riverbank Cottage is a stone built detached 4 bed, 2 bathroom home set in a secluded rural position with attractive gardens & paddock.  
Contact: Richmond office 01748 329971



## Church Fenton, North Yorkshire

£459,950  
offers over

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Contact: Wetherby office 01937 205882



## Nr Winterbourne, Bristol

£1,350,000  
guide price

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Contact: Clifton office 0117 295 7573



## Teignmouth, Devon

£1,150,000  
guide price

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5 bed home finished to an impressively high specification. Hazelnut House occupies a corner plot on the edge of this sought after village.  
Contact: Street office 01458 521949



**Bradley,** **West Yorkshire** £339,950

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Contact: Silsden office 01535 435936



**Llannon,** **Carmarthenshire** £299,950

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Contact: Llanelli office 01554 550968



**Chilton Moor,** **Tyne and Wear** £249,950

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Contact: Houghton Le Spring 0191 563 0830



**East Carlton,** **Northamptonshire** £1,250,000

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Contact: Market Harborough 01858 513933



**Wingrave,** **Buckinghamshire** £1,250,000 guide price

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Contact: Berkhamsted office 01442 493832



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**Morchard Bishop,** **Devon** £700,000 offers in excess of

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Contact: Exeter office 01392 976723



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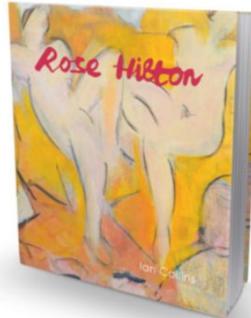
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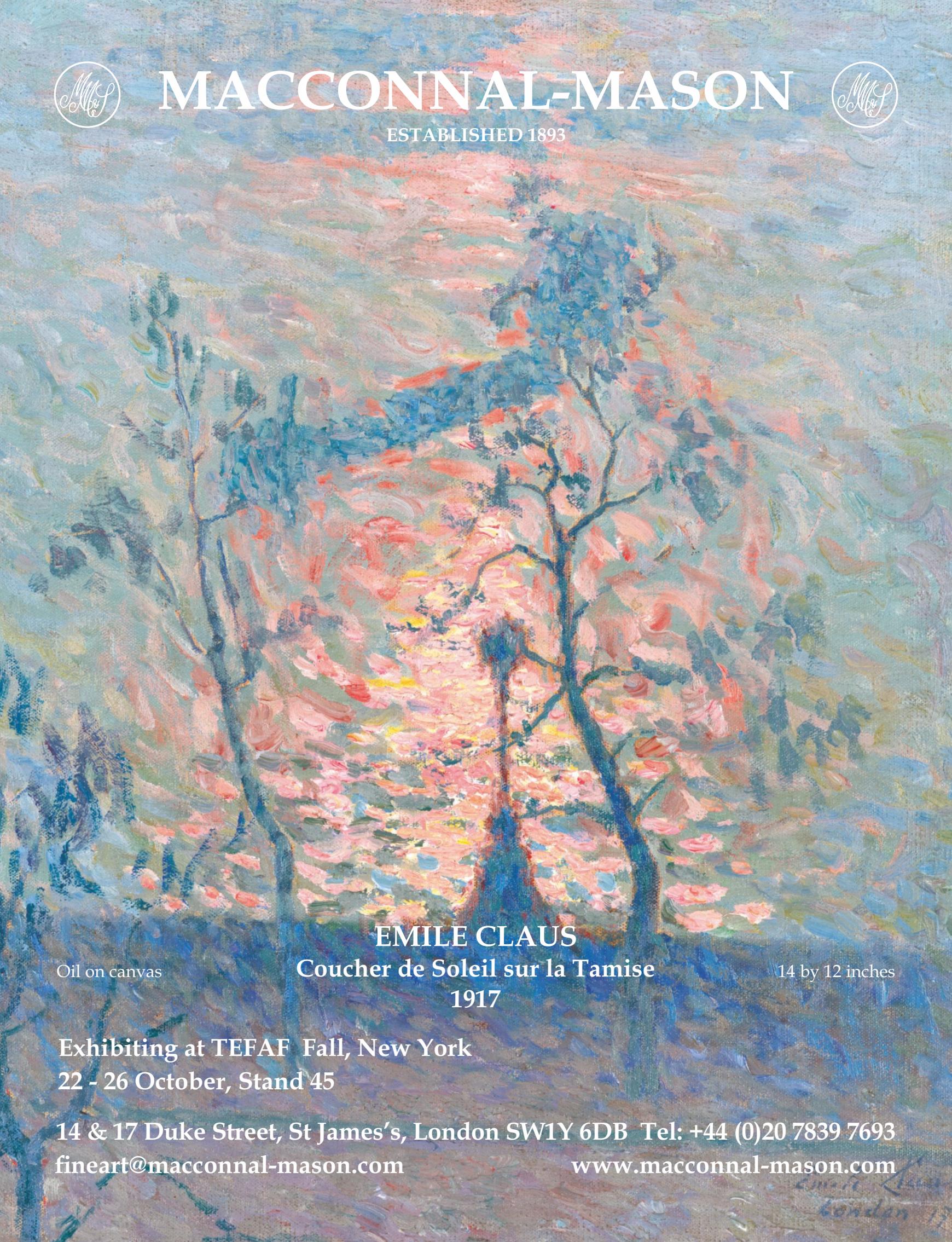




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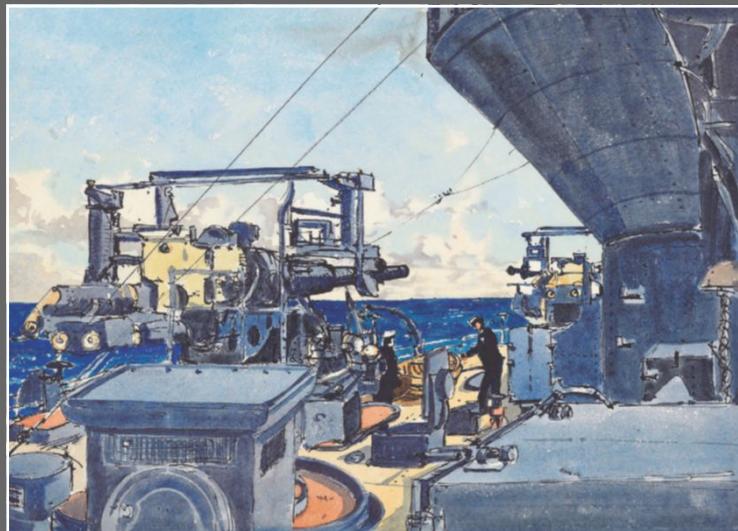
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**Claude Muncaster P.R.S.M.A., R.W.S., R.O.I., R.B.A. (1903-1974)**  
*On board S.S. Arcadia in the Indian Ocean*  
watercolour  
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**Claude Muncaster P.R.S.M.A., R.W.S., R.O.I., R.B.A. (1903-1974)**  
*H.M.S. Rodney in the Mediterranean*  
ink and watercolour  
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**Bernard Finegan Gribble (1873-1962)**  
*The surrender of the German High Seas Fleet at Scapa Flow, 21st November 1918*  
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20 x 30 in. (50.8 x 76.2 cm.)



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# COUNTRY LIFE®

VOL CCX NO 41, OCTOBER 12, 2016



## *Miss Katie McDonnell*

Katie, aged 25, is the eldest daughter of Mr and Mrs Guy McDonnell of Windsor, Berkshire. With a first-class honours degree in mathematics from the University of Southampton, Katie is one of the world's leading freerunners and recently won 'best female' at the World Freerunning & Parkour Federation's Pro-Am Championship 2016 in Las Vegas. Last year, she became the first woman to reach the Ninja Warrior UK final and regularly appears in advertising campaigns.

*Photographed at South Bank Tower, London SE1, by Scott Bass*

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View of the River Thames and Lambeth Palace by Jan Griffier (De Agostini Picture Library/G. Dagli Orti/Bridgeman Images)



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'Mudlarking has become a way for the Londoner to connect with the city's past'

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## Cooking with fungi

**Mushrooms can be crumbly, rubbery, fibrous or slimy'**

**Champion champignons, page 90**

## Queen Victoria's jewellery

'Sentiment was a major theme of the jewels designed by Albert for his wife'

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Dean Mason/BBC/Press Association Images; Ted Sanderling 2016; dieKleinert/Alamy Stock Photo; Classic Image/Alamy Stock Photo

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# What price beauty?

**L**ONDONERS are now beginning to understand why country people become strenuously protective of 'their' views. The ongoing transformation of the capital's skyline continues apace. Every month or so, their emergence heralded by the erection of tall cranes, new tower blocks and skyscrapers rear their heads. Still more have received planning permission.

Even for relatively informed Londoners, it's very difficult to know where the next ones will appear. Setting aside the handful of prestige projects that garner national press coverage, these buildings seem to come into being without any real discussion or consultation. With some striking exceptions, few have any pretension to architectural quality.

In part, this is because the planning system is almost hopelessly parochial when it comes to tall buildings. By virtue of their prominence and height, these have visual neighbourhoods on an immense scale. They also intrude disproportionately in relatively low-built areas, including parks, and where there are concentrations of historic buildings.

One curious consequence—and this isn't entirely a bad thing—is that Londoners are

becoming much more aware of the actual topographical relationship between the different parts of their city. Vauxhall may feel like a different world from Pimlico—and be divided from it by the Thames—but the residents of each can now see the other.

There are protected lines of sight, most famously to and from St Paul's. Yet, paradoxically, the limited protection of these views has apparently become a licence to fill the interstices between them. Central London is being irretrievably altered and the streetscape closed in. The view from the house bought unsuspectingly, whether 20 years ago or last year, is now likely to be completely different—and not necessarily for the better.

Massive, distant buildings shadow vistas down streets that used to close with the sky; glimpses of historic public buildings, church spires and trees are vanishing. That's a much more important cumulative transformation than whether this or that 'iconic' skyscraper is built.

In the countryside, the question of who owns the view becomes even more pertinent, with the dichotomy of beauty versus local economy and employment. It's said that film-makers are abandoning Scotland because of the wind turbines. Those who object to Hinkley Point in Somerset might not be depending on it for a job. Farmers have to jump through hoops to convert barns into businesses that employ people or holiday cottages that bring tourists. The go-ahead for fracking in Lancashire is a blow to local democracy, yet Britain has to try out this potentially valuable power source.

On page 50, the CPRE shows how solar panels can be attractive (*Town & Country*). Can we have it all? As we try to become more self-sufficient as a non-EU country, the question becomes increasingly desperate, yet appears impossible to discuss in a meaningful way.

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# Let there be light

**A** NEW report from the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) and BRE National Solar Centre provides an invaluable guide to ‘how solar panels on buildings can look good, whatever the structure or surrounding landscape’.

‘The English countryside can make a significant contribution to reducing greenhouse-gas emissions,’ says CPRE chief executive Shaun Spiers. ‘We need to find cleaner sources of energy, but this should not be at the price of unacceptable harm to our countryside.’

Solar panels, mostly attached to non-listed buildings—barns, greenhouses, outbuildings, etc—do not usually require planning permission.

There is little guidance available on how to do this appropriately, but with 800,000 home solar-panel systems installed in the UK since 2010, and

new technologies reducing the cost of solar panels despite Government subsidy cuts, the CPRE’s report and 10-point how-to guide is long awaited.

Among various case studies and design tips, the charity advocates blending in at all costs, using, for example, panels that match the size and shape of existing roof tiles, covering an entire roof with panels, instead of a small portion, and the use of symmetry. Electricity can also be generated from a special type of solar glazing for windows—ideal for greenhouses.

Leonie Greene of the Solar Trade Association comments: ‘Given the great range of products on offer today and some fabulous examples of best practice, there is no excuse for solar roofs that are anything less than stunning.’

Visit [www.cpre.org.uk](http://www.cpre.org.uk) for information and to download the guides

## Facts and figures

**You don't need planning permission to install solar panels on domestic buildings (garden sheds, greenhouses and outhouses next to country homes), except on listed ones. However, certain conditions must be met. Solar panels:**

- Must not protrude more than 20cm (7¾in) from the roof or wall
- Must not be higher than the highest part of the roof
- Must not ‘be visible from a highway’ in conservation areas or World Heritage Sites

**On non-domestic buildings (farm buildings, churches, commercial greenhouses and offices), only solar panels up to 1MW are permitted without planning permission. However, they:**

- Are subject to approval on design
- Must not protrude more than 20cm (7¾in) on pitched roofs
- Must not extend more than 1m (3ft 3in) above the highest part of a flat roof
- Must not be installed within 1m (3ft 3in) of the edge of the roof
- Must not be installed on a listed building or in its grounds

**If in doubt, contact your local planning authority**

## Prettier panels

Kim Hagen, senior energy campaigner at CPRE, shares her insider knowledge on installing solar panels on all types of roofs



With clever positioning, panels can blend in nicely, even on listed buildings

### Colour

You may think that the colour of panels is limited to traditional bright blue, but there is now a whole range of finishes and tones that fit in with different buildings. Some panels even have a marbled colour to mimic the dappled shade of trees. But be careful—unusual colours may be less efficient at producing energy.

### Shape and size

You no longer have to choose a one-size-fits-all panel; a selection of shapes and sizes means that, with clever positioning, panels can blend in nicely. It's important to think about how they fit with the features of your roof, such as skylights and windows. And, if you're worried about panels spoiling a slate roof, there are also 'solar slates', which look like the real thing.

### Installation

Traditional solar panels are mounted on rails attached to the roof. A clean look can be achieved if the panels sit as flush with your roof as possible. Building solar panels into the roof itself solves this problem completely, but 'in-roof' solar can be difficult to install in existing buildings. An alternative is thin solar film, which can be applied onto glass to create transparent 'solar glazing'—great for greenhouses or conservatories.

**Poor**

**Better**

**Best**



It's important that panels fit with roof features such as skylights

### Good week for

#### Pork-pie bakers

Dickinson & Morris, which has been baking pork pies at Ye Olde Pork Pie Shoppe in Melton Mowbray since 1851, has released its secret recipe

#### Rare species

The UK's first black dormouse has been discovered and, for the first time in 400 years, a Welsh-born common crane, once a favourite at medieval banquets, has taken to the skies

#### Beer guzzlers

The number of breweries in Britain has increased by 8% due to a surge in the popularity of craft beers

### Bad week for

#### Cod love

Cornish cod travelling north might not attract mates as their Scouse counterparts can't understand their regional accents, scientists warn

#### Welsh communication

Wales has the worst 4G in the UK, with mobile-phone users only able to connect 35.4% of the time, compared with 69.7% in London

#### Environmentalists

Cuadrilla's fracking appeal for a site in Lancashire has been upheld; for the first time in the UK, shale gas will be extracted horizontally

### Young at heart in the countryside

Defra Secretary Andrea Leadsom has called for Britain's youngsters to 'engage with countryside matters' and take up jobs currently done by EU migrants, such as fruit-picking and farm labour.

In agriculture alone, the UK benefits from more than 30,000 permanent and 67,000 seasonal overseas workers. They 'play a crucial role in the rural economy, not least in farming and the whole food chain,' says CLA president Ross Murray, who suggests the introduction of 'a seasonal agricultural workers' scheme post-Brexit, enabling people to enter the UK for a specific job, for a set period of time without the right to remain afterwards'.

Speaking at the Conservative Party Conference in Birmingham last week, Mrs Leadsom made clear that, although there is no intention to deport anyone, 'before we joined the EU, we had a very good programme of seasonal workers' licences and it is not beyond the wit of man to have such a thing in future'. 

After 14 months of careful conservation and in the 400th year since construction began, the Queen's House in Greenwich, London SE10—the Palladian villa by Inigo Jones that 'introduced Classical architecture to Britain'—has reopened to the public.

The centrepiece of the new display will be the *Armada Portrait of Elizabeth I*. It became part of the national collection of the Royal Museums of Greenwich this July, following an overwhelmingly successful public fundraising campaign ('*My honour and my blood*', July 13).

Some 300 maritime masterpieces from the Royal Museums of Greenwich are also on show; they include works by Canaletto, Lely, Stubbs, Hogarth, Lowry and Reynolds. In addition, 50 significant paintings are on loan from the Royal Collection, Tate, V&A, National Portrait Gallery, British Museum and many others.

'In recent times, the Queen's House has been something of a mystery to Greenwich visitors, perhaps even a little impenetrable,' says curator Christine Riding. 'The diverse collections we are able to show will bring real historical and cultural detail and help to make sense of the building, past and present.'

The 17th-century villa is set to become a hub for contemporary art, too, with new collections and acquisition programmes. In the 1630s, Florentine artist Orazio Gentileschi created a series of nine ceiling paintings for its famous Great Hall, to complement the striking black-and-white marble floor. It remained in situ until 1708.

## Fit for a Queen



Now, Turner Prize-winner Richard Wright has created a permanent new work to replace Gentileschi's, which Dr Riding calls 'the most significant artistic development here for nearly 400 years'.

*No title* features gold leaf, reflecting Jones's carved and gilded ceilings and scrolled, spiral balustrade on the Tulip Stairs, the first in Britain to be built without a central support.

### **The Queen's House, Greenwich: 'one of the greatest buildings in this country' has reopened**

'When the Queen's House was built, its architectural style was seen as revolutionary and it has long been acknowledged as one of the greatest buildings in this country,' explains Dr Riding. 'Now, we are determined that it becomes a vibrant, ever-changing and endlessly rewarding house of delight for lovers of art, architecture and history.' Visit [www.rmg.co.uk](http://www.rmg.co.uk) for further information.

Royal Museums Greenwich; RBGE; Wild Horse Welfare; COUNTRY LIFE Picture Library; Lucy Sewill



## Not extinct after all!

A SPECIES of elm believed to have been extinct in the British Isles has been discovered growing in the gardens of The Queen's official residence in Scotland. The two Wentworth elm trees, each about 100ft tall, are among the largest in the gardens of the Palace of Holyroodhouse in Edinburgh. Despite their vast size, it was only during a recent survey of the gardens that they were identified as the species *Ulmus Wentworthii Pendula* (left), the last remaining specimens of which were thought to have succumbed to the ravages of Dutch elm disease in the late 20th century.

'That's the most striking thing about this story,' enthuses Dr Max Coleman of the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (RBGE). 'It seems very odd on the face of it that these massive trees, which are probably the most photographed trees in the grounds of the palace, have gone unrecognised until now.' It's still unclear where the trees came from. Archivists from the Royal Household theorise that the trees may have been given to Holyrood by the RBGE and that their sibling at the botanical garden died. Experts are now looking into ways of propagating the rare specimens, with a view to preserving the species. *James Fisher*

## Horses of another colour

FOURTEEN colourful sculptures, which caused a stir at Badminton Horse Trials in May, will be auctioned on November 4 to raise money for World Horse Welfare ([www.worldhorsewelfare.org](http://www.worldhorsewelfare.org)).

The muse is May, a horse rescued after she was found fly-grazing on a disused airfield, emaciated and riddled with worms and leg mites. Thanks to the charity, she made a full recovery and now spends her days hacking along farm tracks or meeting fans at events. Sculptor Judy Boyt created a characterful maquette of May, which was turned into a mould for the fibreglass sculptures, including Katie O'Sullivan's *Mesor* (above).

Identical in size (2ft 4in tall), but unique in interpretation, each horse is by a different artist—ranging from world-leading hat designer David Shilling to equestrian artist Michelle McCullagh and eventing legend Sir Mark Todd—and represents a particular animal that has benefited from the charity's assistance. Bidding for the sculptures is now open at [www.invisiblehorseauction.com](http://www.invisiblehorseauction.com)



### Where it all began

On October 15, an original copy of the first edition of COUNTRY LIFE will be auctioned at Cheffins in Sutton, Cambridgeshire. The issue (left), dated January 8, 1897, is adorned with cover advertisements for Hedges and Butler, Cadbury's, Swaine & Adeney's 'New Raw Hide Riding Whip', Osmond Cycles, 'Old Grans Special Toddy: the cream of Highland whiskies' (at the bargain price of 48s per dozen) and the Grand Hotel London. It features the Earl of Suffolk and Berkshire as the magazine's first Frontispiece and incorporates *Racing Illustrated*.

COUNTRY LIFE celebrates its 120th anniversary next year, so this is as good a time as any to own this collector's item, which we promise will make for fascinating reading. Visit [www.cheffins.co.uk](http://www.cheffins.co.uk) or telephone 01353 777767 for further information.

## Why the long face?

AN entrancing book of photography, *Horses and Humans*, has been published to accompany a new exhibition at The Gallery, Sculpture by the Lakes, near Dorchester (October 15 to November 12).

Photographer Lucy Sewill—whose work can be seen in the National Portrait Gallery and who remembers fondly every horse she has had, from childhood to adulthood—is fascinated by the 'joyous bond' between animals and their owners. Her subjects range from famous horse whisperer Monty Roberts with Shy Boy to Olympic contender William Fox-Pitt with Chilli Morning and equestrian acrobat Amy Panter (right, with Mrs Sewill's



horse Malaguena). The exhibition includes 30 photographs, the book £50 (£35, Peridot Press).

Visit [www.sculpturebythelakes.co.uk](http://www.sculpturebythelakes.co.uk) for further information.

## Country Mouse

All together now



HERE are twice as many people living in the countryside as in Greater London, but the main press and media are so biased towards metropolitan issues that you could easily wonder if they realise that the countryside exists.

The long hours and low incomes—many hill farmers earn less than £10,000 a year—would be reported as a scandal if it were happening in London. If Londoners, too, had the same low broadband speeds and lack of mobile reception as many of us in the country receive, they would march on Parliament. Perhaps we rural folk should.

Last week, Theresa May, in her conference speech, promised to do something for the people who are 'just managing'. She noted that many people voted for Brexit as they felt forgotten. A large proportion of these people are living in the forgotten part of Britain: the countryside.

However, for the rural community to achieve what it needs, there must be a coalition of interest. There is a vast plethora of countryside bodies, many directly opposed to each other, although all are intent on a better countryside. If they could start working together, wonders could be achieved. MH

## Town Mouse

Amateur theatricals



THIS week had three theatrical highlights, although only two of them were planned and conventionally set on the stage. I took a goddaughter to Shakespeare's Globe for *The Merchant of Venice* and any criticisms I might have felt for the production were entirely drowned by her self-evident delight at the experience. Rather more trying, in my view, was a production of *Ivanov* at the National Theatre.

It was well acted, but Chekhov's worldview is hardly conducive to an enjoyable night out. The plot, not to mention the actions of the principal characters, seemed scarcely credible. So, when the narcissism of the eponymous hero finally and inevitably drove him to suicide, I inwardly felt that the fatal gunshot came at least 20 minutes too late.

But all this drama was as nothing to the third performance. This was an amateur production staged at home, in the early hours of the morning, by one of the children. It took the form of a violent fit of vomiting. As if in mockery of our efforts to clear up the mess, the other child slept peacefully throughout. When I got back to bed, I felt a dangerous flicker of sympathy with the outlook of the egotist Ivanov. JG

# Town & Country Notebook

## Quiz of the week

- 1) How many pieces are there in a chess game?
- 2) *Reservoir Dogs* was the feature-length film debut of which director?
- 3) What do the letters RSVP stand for?
- 4) Who was the first unseeded man to win the Wimbledon's singles title?
- 5) According to tradition, where must a true Cockney be born to earn the name?

100 years ago in

## COUNTRY LIFE October 14, 1916



TO our Russian readers: To the staff of COUNTRY LIFE it has been a labour of love to prepare an edition of this journal devoted to Russia. The labour was dignified by a great object. This is to promote and improve the good relations now established between Britain and her great Ally... Russia, above all else, is a land of dreams and ideas. To bring out the leading characteristics on paper is not easy, but we have a proverb in this country that if you strive for a silk gown you will, maybe get the sleeve of it, and we shall be very content if in these pages our Russian friends find traces of an effort that is always sincere even when it may stumble.

## Words of the week

**Nostrificate** (verb)

To accept as one's own

**Pauciloquent** (adjective)

Uttering few words;  
brief in speech

**Hamartia** (noun)

A fatal flaw leading to the downfall of a tragic hero or heroine

1) 32 2) Quentin Tarantino 3) *Respondez s'il vous plaît* 4) Boris Becker 5) Within earshot of the bells of St Mary-le-Bow Church, Cheapside

## The nature of things

### Barnacle goose

FLOCKS of geese are arriving on our shores, escaping from the impending chill of an Arctic winter in their summer breeding grounds. For barnacle geese, their navigation takes them to our shores as certainly as GPS. Those from Spitsbergen home in on the Solway Firth, Greenland's birds seek out the Hebrides and those from Arctic Russia head for Holland, but, if they overshoot, may arrive on the marshes of Norfolk and Kent. Numerous birds sojourn on Ireland's coasts.

A charming small, monochrome goose, the barnacle long held a great mystery. Back in the mists of time, people wondered from where these great flocks of birds had come, flying in from the seas and settling along coastal pastures. Ignorant of distant migrations and with no evidence of nesting, the imaginative conclusion was that these birds had risen out of the sea, from the oval black-and-white crustaceans still known as goose- or gooseneck barnacles. Not everybody was convinced. The Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II (1194–1250) could find no obvious physical link. However, Gerard in his *Herball* (1597) was at pains to uphold the



myth, illustrating it with fantastical barnacle 'trees' on the ocean's edge, bearing large shells 'and out of them grow those living things, which falling into the water do become fowles, which we call Barnakles'. **KBH**

Illustration by Bill Donohoe

## Time to buy

**Blackbird-and-bramble cushion,**  
£45.00, Thornback and Peel  
(020-7831 2878;  
[www.thornbackandpeel.co.uk](http://www.thornbackandpeel.co.uk))



**Bauhaus dog lead in apricot/flint**, from £95, Mungo and Maud (020-7022 1207; [www.mungoandmaud.com](http://www.mungoandmaud.com))



**Premier Cartridge Bag in Harness Brown**, £124.99 including personalisation option, Teales ([www.teales.co.uk](http://www.teales.co.uk))



'The Sun himself is weak when he first rises, and gathers strength and courage as the day gets on'

*The Old Curiosity Shop,  
Charles Dickens*

## Unmissable events

### Arts festival

**October 12–16**

**Sherborne Literary Festival**, Sherborne, Dorset. A literary highlight of the year, featuring talks from Mavis Cheek, Ferdinand Mount, Artemis Cooper and Terry Waite ([www.sherborneliterarysociety.com](http://www.sherborneliterarysociety.com))



### October 13–16 The Isle of Wight Literary Festival

**Festival**, Northwood House, Cowes, Isle of Wight. Highlights will include COUNTRY LIFE's theatre critic Michael Billington, literary agent Caroline Sheldon, novelist D.J. Taylor and fungi expert John Wright (<http://isleofwightliteraryfestival.com>)

**October 19–23 Bloomsbury Festival**, various venues, London WC1. This year's theme is 'language' and the festival includes breakfast talks, classical concerts, dance and sound and visual-art installations ([www.bloomsburyfestival.org.uk](http://www.bloomsburyfestival.org.uk))

### Charity raceday

**October 23 Combat Stress Families and Armed Forces Raceday**, Wincanton Racecourse, Somerset. Guests are encouraged to come dressed as their favourite superhero or

princess and enjoy a day's racing in support of Combat Stress. Admission from £16 (01936 435840; <http://wincanton.thejockeyclub.co.uk>)

### Art fair

**October 22–30**

**PURE Autumn Art Fair**, The

Powder Mills Hotel, Battle, East Sussex. Showcasing both upcoming and established talent, featuring the work of 60 artists working across all fine art, including painting, drawing, printmaking, photography, sculpture, ceramics and glass ([www.pureartsgroup.co.uk](http://www.pureartsgroup.co.uk))



### Literary performance

**October 27 War Horse: The Story in Concert (above)**, Royal Albert Hall, South Kensington, London SW7. Michael Morpurgo reads his

popular novel accompanied by the Royal Philharmonic Concert Orchestra (020-7589 8212; [www.royalalberthall.com](http://www.royalalberthall.com))

### Lecture

**October 17**

**'Shakespeare Goes To Venice' (left)**, Society of Antiquaries, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London W1. Venice in Peril's

chairman Jonathan Keates discusses theories of Shakespeare's so-called lost years between leaving Stratford and making his name as a playwright in London. What if he visited Venice and the Veneto, which provide the settings for five of his plays? Tickets £15 for members, £18 for non-members (020-7736 6891; [www.veniceinperil.org](http://www.veniceinperil.org))

**October 16, 11am–4pm. £4, children free, plants for sale, dogs welcome, homemade teas**

This weekend, you can combine staying in country-house comfort at Caer Beris, set in wonderful mid-Wales countryside, with enjoying its garden open day in aid of the NGS. Paths lead through the 27 acres that are bounded on one side by the River Irfon and, throughout, you will discover rare treasures planted in the early 20th century by the Vivien family, who were plant hunters. Caer Beris has a distinguished NGS pedigree, being one of the elite group of gardens that opened in the schemes first year, 1927, and is still open today. Visit [www.ngs.org.uk](http://www.ngs.org.uk)



**Caer Beris Manor Hotel, Builth Wells, Powys LD2 3NP**



## Bug's Life

Our guide to British invertebrates

### Water stick insect

(*Ranatra linearis*) 2in long

Although large and common, this relative of the water scorpion is rarely seen due to its ability to remain motionless and imitate a stick among reeds and stems, awaiting its prey. Equipped with mantis-like front legs, which enable it to ambush any aquatic creature that ventures into range, this long brown insect also has a thin 'tail' that protrudes above the water and acts as a snorkel.

Simon Lester



## What to drink this week

### Multi-varietal complexity



When it comes to grape varieties, there's no harm in mixing it up, says Harry Eyres

The fashion for single varietal wines started, I seem to remember, in the 1980s. I even edited a series of books on the subject. Grape varieties were easier to grasp than complex and unpronounceable vineyard names; get a handle on half a dozen varieties (Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Riesling, Syrah, Sauvignon Blanc) and you were well on your way to understanding wine. Now, there's a counter-movement: even in regions known for single varietal wines, some producers are going for multi-varietal blends.

### Why you should be drinking them

In some wine regions (Bordeaux, the Douro, Châteauneuf-du-Pape), a mix of varieties has always been the norm, partly as an insurance against one variety failing. But, now, a new generation of wine growers is suggesting that a mélange of grapes is not just safer, but better for flavour and complexity.

### What to drink

I mentioned Châteauneuf-du-Pape, where, famously, 13 grape varieties are permitted. I was most impressed by the Châteauneuf-du-Pape, Signature, Domaine La Barroche 2009 (below, £32.50; [www.justerinis.com](http://www.justerinis.com)): lovely sweet fruit and fruit-cakey complexity. Alsace is a much less likely source of multi-varietal wines, but the questing Domaine Marcel Deiss, the wines of which I have long admired, is going in this direction with its whites. The 2014 Alsace (£16.50; [www.leaandsandeman.co.uk](http://www.leaandsandeman.co.uk)) is made from 13 grape varieties and has richness and spice on the nose, lots of mouth-feel and good acidity. The 2013 Engelgarten (£29.50; [www.leaandsandeman.co.uk](http://www.leaandsandeman.co.uk)) is made from five varieties, with the pure limey structure of Riesling coming through, but also a good deal of richness from Pinot Noir and Pinot Blanc.



## Letter of the week Farmers not to blame

THE problem that I have with the State of Nature report (*Town & Country*, September 21) and its subsequent interpretation by many is the 'easy answer' approach of blaming farming practice.

I don't doubt that this has been a significant factor; however, farmers produce what they are asked to, how they are asked to, as a result of the interaction of the market and government policy. However bizarre this process is, the responsibility ultimately comes back to the individual voter and consumer.

What we have is a system of 'high' standards with some compensation through EU Common Agricultural Policy. But we have a population that largely buys food based on price, through a supply chain where all the power is

in the hands of large corporations, whose first duty is to their shareholders.

Many people are happy to see the current blame culture perpetuated because it hides what is actually happening and means that people don't have to take responsibility for their own actions.

Dr Sean Beer, Dorset

**The writer of the letter of the week will win a bottle of Pol Roger Brut Réserve Champagne**



## A glorious mess

I CONCUR that the weather has been against our butterfly population (*Leader and letters*, September 28), but paved gardens could also be interrupting the breeding stage. Just leaving a patch of nettles in a corner gives many species such as the peacock and red admiral the ideal egg-laying and caterpillar food-plant environment. Lack of time this year left me with an uncharacteristically untidy garden, but the bonus of a host of butterflies. Even on dull, drizzly days, when the more colourful species have not been in flight, the cheerful meadow brown has been regularly busy. Perhaps the answer to John Reeves's question lies in not being too tidy. Linda Bos, West Sussex



## It doesn't work on paper

I AM nearly 61 and no longer have pigtails, but I still have a fine collection of handkerchiefs—some lace-edged, most embroidered—which I use on a daily basis ('A spot of hanky-panky', September 28). When suffering with a cold, there is nothing more acceptable to sore nostrils than a cooling, smooth, white, absorbent square of cotton from my late father's collection. As for horrid, harsh, disintegrating tissues—you can keep them! Beth Ingpen, Moray



## Buy more British food

THE UK's population has grown by a million in only two years. This rate of growth can only be sustained by greater, not less, intensification of agricultural output and, as a result, wildlife species simply cannot take precedence over humans. Fortunately, the advent of Brexit will encourage a greater dependence on UK food production, at the possible expense of imports from Ireland, Holland and Denmark.



If dairy farmers could get their act together and produce, say, a competitive Saint Agur and a Camembert to meet national demand, we would be going some way to improving our self-sufficiency.

When dairy farmers voted two to one to disband the Milk Marketing Board, they invoked an element of self-destruction. It is also hard to be supportive of Red Tractor Week when British farmers choose to import John Deere tractors from the USA, Claas combine harvesters from Germany and milking equipment from Sweden. Let us buy more British food and ask farmers to spend their capital in the UK.

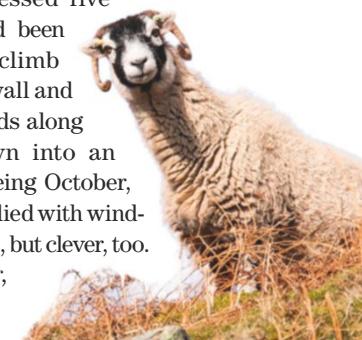
Colin Milne, Wiltshire

## Excellence isn't elitist

I COULDN'T agree more with Agromenes's piece, *Inclusion at the expense of excellence* (August 24). General dumbing down is so palpable that I buy fewer and fewer American magazines, but, thankfully, the saving grace is British ones—and COUNTRY LIFE is my favourite. Whether living in the countryside or in town, we need the excellences and culture that have been mistakenly labelled as 'elitism' in recent years—thank you for championing our shared cultural excellences. Jessica Wong, North Carolina, USA

## Ovine scrumpers

SWALEDALES (below) are just as good scramblers as Hebridean sheep (*Letters*, September 28). Recently, I witnessed five hoggets, which had been fed in one field, climb onto a dry stone wall and run about 50 yards along it, dropping down into an orchard that, it being October, was liberally supplied with windfalls. Not only agile, but clever, too. David Whitaker, Edinburgh



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## A room with a view

**I**T was interesting to see the bas-relief plaster panels at Ditchley Park (*September 21 and 28*), based on *tondi* from the Arch of Constantine, depicting sacrifices to the gods. These were engraved by Pietro Bartoli in 1645 and Francois Perrier in 1653, the latter in reverse. It may assist in the debate about the involvement of James Gibbs in the design of the hall at Ditchley to know that the engravings were used in a painted interior in Moray house, Edinburgh, before 1710; a scheme probably designed by Sir William Bruce and which Gibbs may have known.

The decoration there was carried out by Roderick Chalmers and James Norie for Charles, 6th Earl of Moray and his wife, Anne Campbell, Countess of Lauderdale. The large overdoor panels are the only known example of 'imitation tapestry', advertised by Chalmers and Norie in the *Scots Courant* in 1711.

In this photograph of the room at Moray house (*above*), the walls are painted in dark brown to conceal an earlier scheme of oak graining, but there is evidence that the wainscott was originally pearl blue or grey.

*Joe Rock, East Lothian*

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# How to be a successful Prime Minister

**M**RS MAY will have to work hard not to become Misery May. She's been dealt one of the toughest hands of any peacetime Prime Minister and she'll have to play that hand in an increasingly dangerous world. Good news is likely to be in very short supply. Yet optimism is what she has to engender. She'll have to make her own luck and create successes on her own account, otherwise, she'll be dragged under by the squabbling and blame-shifting that Brexit makes inevitable.

Low interest rates, full employment and no credible alternative party give her a fighting chance. Her Chancellor, the increasingly impressive Philip Hammond, has already signalled a willingness to change course and invest in infrastructure and housing. However, that'll have little popular effect if it's merely a matter of pounds spent and units built. It has to be a real sense of national transformation.

We must feel that Britain and its communities are on the march. The underlying theme has to be that Britain can do it, however hard we've made it for ourselves. There must be determination to celebrate every success and build that celebration into every project.

Crossrail is a good place to start—London, too, needs reassurance—but not with only one huge opening, although that is important. Instead, there need to be a thousand stories over a prolonged period, telling of the opportunities for the new businesses, affordable housing and local enterprise that it will unlock. Consciously build into the project the housing that renewed national investment will make possible.

Then, build up a pattern of improvement, instead of a series of unconnected and unremarked developments. Make Crossrail a symbol of success for all Londoners, but don't let it be only for London. Celebrate it as another proof of the value of our national capital to us all: the one-world city.

**Theresa May will have to make her own luck and create successes on her own account**

Mrs May must be a Prime Minister for the whole country and seizing the opportunities of infrastructure investment throughout Britain will be crucial to achieving that. This year, Sheffield was chosen as the pilot for a programme to use new flood defences as a vehicle for regeneration. Her government must show a conscious determination to turn this emergency spending into proof that we are a nation determined to modernise everywhere, but particularly in our great cities.

It's not statistics, but the experience of new opportunities that will create the can-do spirit of optimism Mrs May needs. An infrastructure programme for energy efficiency must reach into the lives of as many people as possible. It should be about partnership with local councils

to transform local estates, using local builders and working with residents to reinforce and revitalise the local community, not a national tender for X million conversions done by Barratt Developments and managed by Capita.

Making a thousand enterprises possible and profitable is far more likely to create a can-do nation than a few mammoth prestige projects. Modern technology means the countryside is full of businesses that would blossom, if only the Government would tackle the barriers to their growth.

For instance, climate change, chalky soil and south-facing slopes have created an English sparkling-wine industry ready to take off big time, if only we'd learn from the French how to encourage it further. The Scandinavians have shown how to make Green business good business and the Germans how family enterprises can flourish in every corner of the nation.

Mrs May must use these examples to drive success in local communities nationwide and make sure that every one is celebrated.



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## Athena

Cultural Crusader

### The long-lost sound of silence

Fred van Deelen; Pitchford Estate/James Nason

**A**S we skim through the open British countryside at high speed in trains or on motorways, it's all too easy to forget how recent this experience of travel is. Places that, not so long ago, would have taken our ancestors days to reach are now upon us in hours, sometimes minutes. The unfolding rivers, hills and valleys that were once obstructions to movement are now easily spanned by bridges or slashed through like a knife in melted butter. To visit a part of Europe where movement has not yet been revolutionised, therefore, is a fascinating and revealing experience. It illustrates that, although we have gained much with our gathering speed, there is also something that we have lost.

Transylvania is a gently rolling, hilly territory that looks rather surprisingly

like parts of Devon and Sussex and which is enclosed by the Carpathian Mountains within modern-day Romania. You can fly there today in less than three hours. It was settled in the late Middle Ages by Saxons, who were given special privileges to establish themselves within this fertile area, in the knowledge that they were placing themselves in the front line against invaders from the Ottoman east. The Saxons efficiently organised their villages with houses and barns clustered in orderly fashion around a church. They also sensibly developed fortifications around their churches, which were also often converted into fortresses in their own right.

Alas, the ramparts and towers they created couldn't defend the Saxons against the political vagaries of the 20th century and, after 800 years, their populations have dwindled in the past 30 years almost to nothing. This is now a deserted landscape—a Devon or a Sussex with a much-diminished population, which ekes out an existence from unmechanised agriculture, where field sizes are still small, farm buildings are still ancient and largely made of timber and where the horse and cart is the sole method of moving produce. In this landscape of Constable, there are no cars, no modern development, no extensions,

no sprawl, no streetlights—just empty, ancient village streets that tip directly into an even emptier countryside. Any people that may be there move about on foot.

Life here is manifestly hard, so it's no wonder that people have fled from it. Yet, standing alone in a Transylvanian village is a sobering means of evoking a Britain we have irretrievably lost. The most noticeable thing, perhaps, is the silence; long, sustained periods of it, with no passing 4x4s, food-delivery lorries or white vans, no distant burglar alarm, car alarm or droning tractor. Attendant on this is a remarkable sense of place, in which every tree is known, every rut and puddle in each well-trudged path familiar.

‘Life here is manifestly hard, so it's no wonder people have fled from it,’

We can't—and wouldn't want to—turn the clock back, but nor should we forget how compelling this quality of place is. How ironic that we must travel ever further and faster to find it.

### This week

It's happy news that, after more than two decades of difficulty, Pitchford Hall in Shropshire is back in family hands once more. Rowena Colthurst, whose parents sold the property in 1992, after offering it with 76 acres as a gift to the nation, has bought this magnificent timber-framed house with her husband, James Nason. They are reuniting the house with its former estate, which they already own. In their hands, Pitchford Hall will again become a family home and will also be available for tours and weddings 



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# Racing against the dying of the light

**W**AKING this morning, blinking at the ceiling in the pale October light, I sensed something was missing. It was the sound of the wood pigeon on the wire outside the window. All summer, we have listened to that familiar husky song, interspersed with the feathery flappings of his amorous manoeuvres. It is a song that reads like a weary complaint repeated comfortingly, one I remember as: 'My toe hurts Betty, my toe hurts Betty.'

**‘We have as much ownership of landscape as the flitting swallows’**

And it occurs to me that autumn days in the countryside are curiously quiet. The children are back at school, the combine harvesters are back in their sheds, the acrobatic pilot of Sedgehill has stopped circling above our garden and the songbirds have finally exhausted themselves. Yet, there is still the absorbent cushion of leaf on the trees, which creates a certain closeness and hush. Let's hope for a slow-burning season of clear, calm weather.

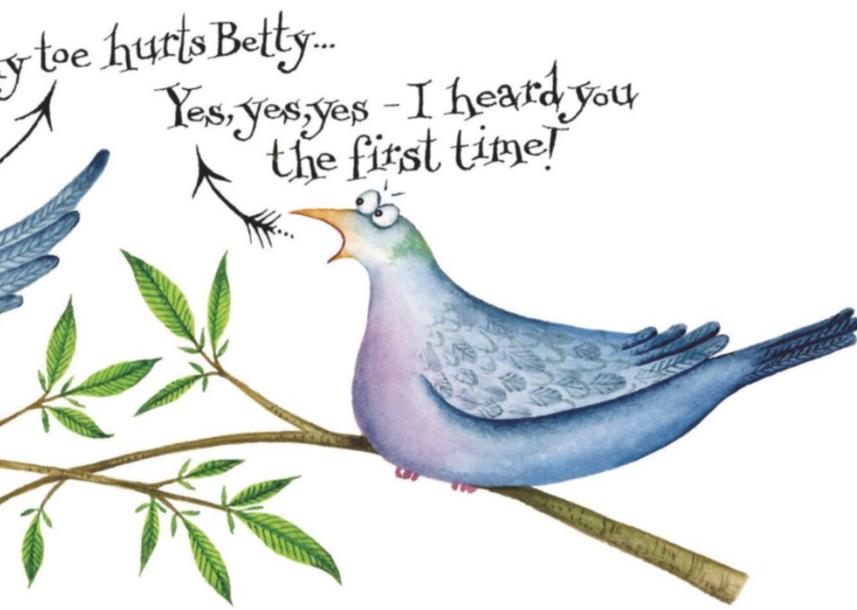
As an outdoors painter of landscape, I actively need a run of good weather as I attempt to complete some paintings on the Dorset coast, near Lulworth Cove. It's my favourite stretch, where chalk downland meets rich-blue sea. Above the white cliffs, there are still straggler packs of swallows skirting the coastline, before launching across the sea, southwards for winter. So long, my friends—and good luck.

I realise how eccentric this must appear: an artist on a cliff saluting passing birdlife. Unusually,

the other day, I found myself painting alongside another artist on the exact same location. It was Peter Brown, an artist I know of and admire, known in his hometown of Bath as Pete-the-Street. Independently, we had both made the same pilgrimage to record the famous natural limestone arch and iridescent cove known as Man O' War.

We aren't alone. Despite it being low season, there's a constant stream of visitors making its way down the path towards the sea. It seems the place attracts like-minded people, in particular, large groups of Hindus. From a distance, their colourful saris could easily be confused with the more common medley of hikers' anoraks. More than once, I have been asked to take photos of beautifully dressed couples in front of the arch.

Amazingly, it seems Durdle Door is one of several natural stone arches worldwide that are of particular symbolic significance to Hindus—apparently, arches are lucky and symbolise fertility and rebirth. I'm told that a Bollywood star of the 1980s famously swam through Durdle Door. The cultural incongruity is strangely charming and adds to the idea that there is something magical about the place.



**A**utumn is also a busy time of year for the art market, not only for the international auction houses, but also for commercial galleries. A few people such as myself are looking anxiously at the post-referendum environment, wondering whether there's still life in the old dog.

Apparently, there is, with some galleries claiming better-than-usual interest during the quiet summer months. One gallerist told me not to worry about demand for British landscape painting. He said most collectors of such pictures are well-insulated Brexiteers, for whom British landscape has become even more precious and appealing. That's a relief, in one sense.

However, it was a throwaway line that I found troubling. Can anyone own the idea of landscape, be they a section of the electorate, an artist or a Hindu pilgrim? Landscape defies boundaries, it slips the categorisations we ascribe it. In a sense, we all have as much intellectual ownership of it as the flitting swallows.

**W**ith the drawing in of useful painting light and the onset of the exhibition season, I'm spending more time with other artists than usual. It's a curious thing, when artists

socialise. For some, there's a tendency to wear ridiculously flamboyant clothes—or at least the regulation 'artist's hat'. Perhaps it's a reaction against stinking overalls, but I try to avoid such sartorial overload.

Also, because we spend a lot of time on our own, we have an overwhelming backlog of subjects we need to share with like-minded practitioners. It makes for feverish conversation that we seem unable to control, often veering into obscure technical details about painting materials or some such.

Sadly, it is a well-known truth that artists are competitive and prone to long moans about money. Still, I devour these conversations compulsively, before journeying home to a place where the owls hoot and screech.

If an artist ever gets too full of himself, or even too gregarious, there'll always be the intimidating blank canvas to put him back in his place.



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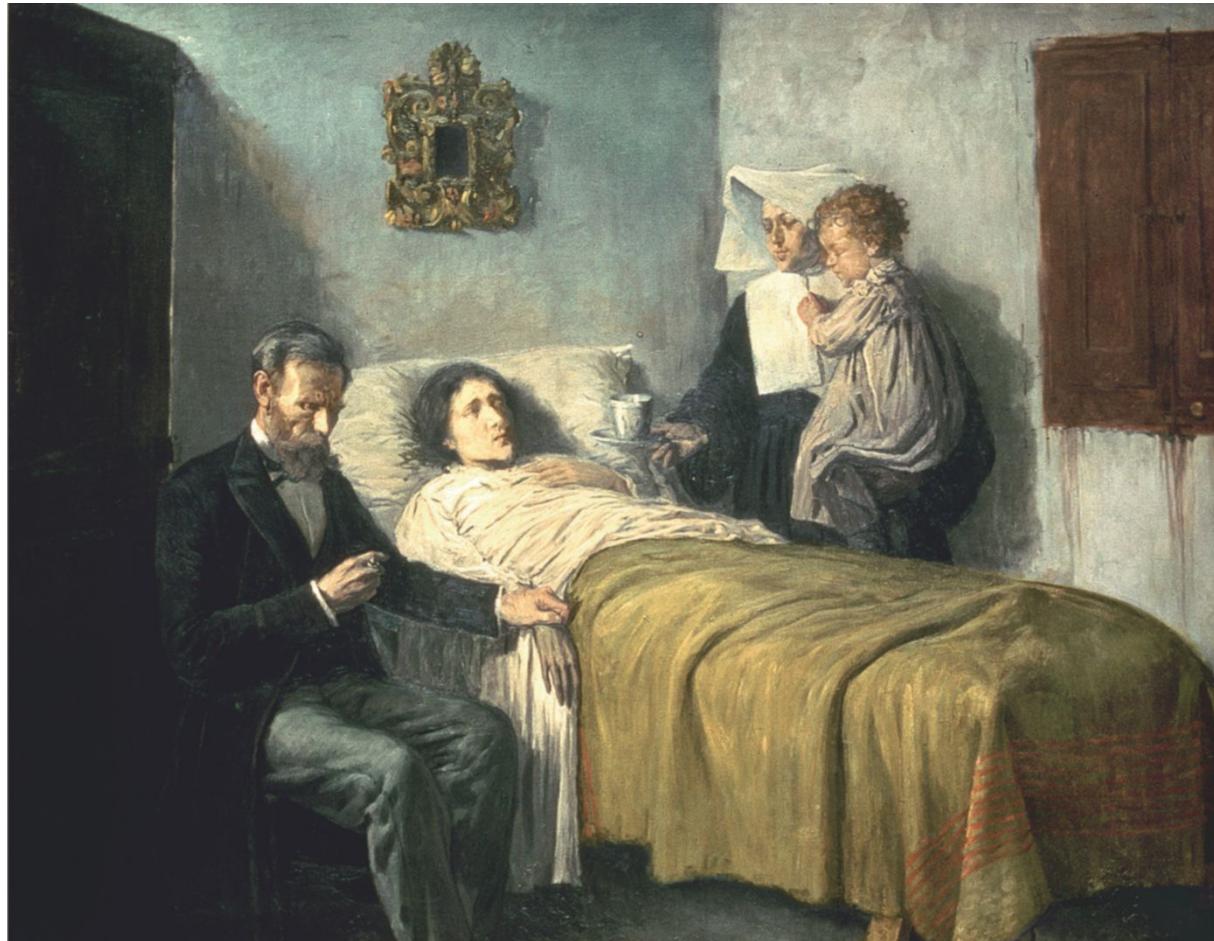
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# My favourite painting Clare Marx

## *Science and Charity* by Picasso



*Science and Charity*, 1897, by Picasso (1881–1973), 78in by 98in, Museu Picasso, Barcelona, Spain



Clare Marx is President of the Royal College of Surgeons

Early in my marriage, we went to Barcelona for the weekend. We wandered the sun-drenched streets and eventually entered the cool of the Picasso museum. There, to my surprise, I saw this extraordinary painting. For me, it brings into focus the importance of physical contact in the doctor-patient relationship—the simple act of feeling a pulse gives human contact that patients understand and accept and from which they can derive reassurance and comfort. For clinicians, this single act gives vital information all at the touch of a hand. In this moment of quiet, there is time to observe patient and circumstance, think and diagnose. Picasso captured it brilliantly.

### John McEwen comments on *Science and Charity*

JOHN RICHARDSON, Picasso's biographer, has dismissed the child-prodigy legends, the most famous of which details Picasso's father—an art teacher who specialised in pigeon pictures—handing over his brushes to the boy Picasso saying he would never paint again, having seen him dramatically improve one of his pictures.

Picasso was certainly gifted enough for his father to place all his worldly hopes in his artistic success, but it was achieved through energy, ambition and hard work as much as natural talent. The boy was also mature beyond his years; when he entered art school in Barcelona, having just turned 15, he took Rosita del Oro, six years his senior and star of an equestrian circus, for his first mistress.

Picasso's father, Jose, was a man of leisure without the means, who didn't marry until he was 42 and continued

to depend on the generosity and contacts of his industrious brothers, especially Salvador, a pious and much-respected doctor. Art-teaching posts took the family from sleepy southern Málaga, via Corunna, to bustling Barcelona, capital of Catalonia and the industrial north, where they arrived in 1895.

Picasso loved Barcelona and considered it his 'birthplace'. To please his father, who found him a studio and gave him a large stretched canvas as a house-warming present, he painted *Science and Charity*. The subject honoured devout uncle Salvador, although the model was his father and he couldn't bring himself to paint the customary crucifix over the bed. His father gave the picture its grand title and entered it for a national exhibition in Madrid, where it was officially commended, and in Málaga, where it won a gold medal.

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**D**O you struggle to make it through the day without apologising to an inanimate object? Does someone queuing slightly to your side cause you dizzying levels of unease? Do you have an unhealthy obsession with the weather? If so, you're demonstrating some of the main symptoms of an epidemic that's sweeping the nation, a collection of irksome issues that I've just written a book, *Very British Problems*, about.

Indeed, VBP are so deeply and subtly ingrained in our psyches, it's tricky even to make a diagnosis. These strange ticks, bizarre customs and double meanings (if a Briton ever tells you that they're 'fine, honestly', run for the hills) are just something we're doomed to suffer from forever.

One thing you can take comfort in, however, is that you're not the only person who wakes in cold sweats at the nightmare of being invited to 'say a bit about yourself' or feels as if they have to keep walking at a ridiculously fast speed towards the horizon after passing someone on the pavement. Take comfort in the misfortune of others, you are not alone.

Shutterstock

‘Strictly not drinking in January. Except for beer and wine. And gin for a treat,

‘Not hearing someone for the third time, so just laughing and hoping for the best,

‘Switching from “kind regards” to “regards” as a warning that you’re becoming dangerously close to losing your temper ,

‘Leaving it too late to correct someone, meaning you must live with your new name forever ,

‘Spotting someone you know in the supermarket and immediately burying yourself in a pile of onions ,

# A problem shared is... not very British

Prone to suffering in silence, Britons have been rolling their eyes at, but not speaking up about, everyday irritations for centuries. Rob Temple offers scenarios we can all identify with

‘I’ve probably got time for a quick drink” meaning “I’m going to have 10 drinks”,

‘Automatically replying “only about five minutes” to the question “have you been waiting long?”, despite having been waiting since yesterday ,

‘Saying, “honestly, it’s fine”, to warn of your imminent meltdown ,

‘Reacting to an unknown number by gently placing your telephone underneath a cushion ,

‘Repeatedly pressing the door button on the train before it’s illuminated to assure your fellow commuters you have the situation in hand ,

‘“I’m sure it’ll be fine” meaning “this can only end in disaster” ,

‘Locking yourself in the wardrobe until the window cleaner has finished and left ,

‘Being unable to properly concentrate on the conversation while there’s still one roast potato left on the table ,

‘Assuring your hairdresser that the water temperature is fine, despite a strong suspicion that your scalp is beginning to melt ,

‘Saying “there’s not really much to it” about something you’ve spent decades perfecting ,

‘“I suppose you’re right”—translation: “you’re not right” ,

‘Concentrating so hard on the appropriate eye-contact-to-looking-away ratio that you have no idea what’s being said to you ,

‘“Sorry, it’s a bit tricky, there’s a knack to it”—translation: “just turn the key, you fool” ,

Rob Temple is a journalist and founder of the @SoVeryBritish Twitter account, which has 1.3 million followers and inspired a Channel 4 television show. His first book, ‘Very British Problems’, is published by Sphere (£7.99). Look out for the VBP column, starting in Town & Country Notebook from October 19, exclusively for COUNTRY LIFE

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# When town meets country

Introducing an extract from his latest book for children, Michael Morpurgo reflects on the importance of the countryside for all youngsters, especially those growing up in the city

**T**HIS story of *Didn't We Have a Lovely Time!* is very much at the heart of what Farms for City Children is about, the charity that my wife, Clare, and I founded 40 years ago.

It is very special that now it's being published as a book with illustrations by Quentin Blake and profits going to Farms for City Children. I have often called the charity my greatest story and it is. It's also the inspiration for many of my books, including *War Horse*, which came

from witnessing the trust, mutual affection and understanding between our horse Hebe and a young boy on the farm in Devon.

My greatest story... the idea came upon us quite suddenly. My wife and I were young teachers in a primary school in Kent, but we felt that, whatever we did, we could never really make a difference—that the school system was inevitably failing half of the children and so were we. So, rather idealistically, we moved to Devon and, with

money left by Clare's father, Allen Lane, the founder of Penguin Books, we bought a farm, a large Victorian manor house, and set up a charity.

A year or so later, the first children came from a primary school in Birmingham and, with the help of the teachers and the neighbouring farmers—the Ward family—we pioneered a programme of work designed to extend children in every way possible out on the farm, physically, mentally, emotionally and intellectually.

Today, there are three farms in Pembrokeshire, Gloucestershire and Devon and more than 100,000 children have become farmers for a week, feeding animals, caring for them, digging the land and fetching hay and straw, clearing stones from fields and planting potatoes and sowing seeds. They spend a week away from their screens, playing games and learning to live together. And it's hard work, real work, but they know it's essential and important, that it matters to the animals, to the farm and each other. That it simply matters. They matter. ([www.farmsforcitychildren.org](http://www.farmsforcitychildren.org); 01392 276381)

Quentin Blake, 2016



## *Didn't We Have a Lovely Time!*

THE children always write a lot about the time down at Nethercott, paint pictures of it, make plays of it, and I know they dream about it too, as I do. I am quite sure they never forget it. But one year, and this was a long time ago now, something so extraordinary happened on one of these visits that I felt I had to write it down, just as it happened, so that I should never forget it, and because I know that in years to come, as memory fades, it is going to be difficult to believe. I've always found miracles hard to believe, and this really was a kind of miracle.

The boys and girls at our school come from every corner of the earth, so we are quite used to children who can speak little or no English. But until Ho joined us, we never had a child who didn't speak at all. He was about seven then; 10 now. In the three years he'd been with us, he had never uttered a word. As a result he had very few friends, and spent much of the time on his own. We would see him sitting by himself, reading. He read and he wrote in correct and fluent English, more fluently than many in his class who'd been born just down the street. He excelled in maths too, but never put his hand up in class, was never able to volunteer an answer or a question. He just put it all down on paper, and it was usually right.

None of us ever saw him smile at school, not once. His expression seemed set in stone, fixed in a permanent frown.

By the time of our Nethercott trip, we had all given up trying to get him to talk. Any effort to do so had only one effect—he'd



simply run off, out into the playground, or all the way home if he could. Neither the child psychologist nor the speech therapist could ever get a word out of him either. They told us it was best simply to let him be—to do whatever we could to encourage him and give him confidence, without making demands on him to speak. They weren't sure whether Ho was choosing not to speak, or whether he simply couldn't. It was a mystery.

All we knew about Ho was that he was an orphan boy. Ever since he'd arrived in England he'd been living with his adoptive parents and in all that time he hadn't spoken to them either, not a word. We knew from them that Ho was one of the Boat People, that as the long and terrible war in Vietnam was coming to an end he had managed to escape, somehow. We could only imagine what dreadful suffering he must have lived through, the things he had witnessed, how it must have been for him

to find himself alone in the world, and in a strange country. There were a lot of Boat People coming to England in those days, mostly via refugee camps in Hong Kong, which was still British then.

That first evening we arrived at the farm I asked Michael—he was the farm school manager at Nethercott, and, after all these years, an old friend—to be a little bit careful about how he treated Ho, to go easy on him. Michael could be blunt with the children, pointing at them, firing direct questions in a way that demanded answers. Michael understood. The truth was that everyone down there on the farm was fascinated by this silent little boy from Vietnam, mostly because they'd all heard about the suffering of the Vietnamese Boat People, but this was the first time they'd ever met one of them.

Ho had an aura of stillness about him that set him apart. Even sweeping down the parlour after milking, he would be alone ➤





and intent on the task in hand—working methodically, seriously, never satisfied until the job was done perfectly. He particularly loved to touch the animals, I remember that. Looking wasn't enough. He showed no fear as he eased his hand under a sitting hen to find a warm new-laid egg. He would hold a hen or a duck when no one else would. When she pecked at him he didn't mind. He just stroked her, calmed her down.

Moving the cows out after milking he showed no sign of fear, as many of the other children did. He stomped about in his wellies, clapping his hands at them, driving them on as if he'd been doing it all his life. He seemed to have an easiness around the animals, an affinity with the cows in particular, I noticed. I could see that he was totally immersed in this new life in the country, loving every moment of every day. The shadow that had always seemed to hang over him back at school was lifting; the frown had gone.

On the Sunday afternoon walk along the River Okement, I felt him tugging urgently at the sleeve of my coat, and saw that he was pointing. I looked up just in time to see the flashing brilliance of a kingfisher, flying straight as an arrow down the middle of the river. He and I were the only ones to see it. He so nearly smiled then. There

was a new light in his eyes that I had not seen before.

He seemed so observant, so fascinated with this new world around him, and so confident around the animals, that I was beginning to wonder about his past, whether maybe he might have been a country boy back in Vietnam when he was little. He seemed more at home in the countryside of Devon than any of us city dwellers from London. I was longing to know, longing to ask him, but I dared not. I did not want to risk upsetting him. But moments later, I felt his cold hand creep into mine. That had certainly never happened before. I squeezed it gently and he squeezed back. This was every bit as good as talking, I thought. So I asked him no questions, just smiled down at him and kept my silence.

Once a week during our visits, Michael used to come up in the evening to read one of his stories to the children. He was a writer and he liked to test his stories out. We liked listening to them too—he never seemed to get offended if any of the children nodded off. And they were so tired that they often did. We teachers would have them all washed and ready in their dressing gowns (not easy, I can tell you, when there are nearly forty of them!). We would hand round mugs of steaming hot chocolate, and gather them round the fire in the sitting room for Michael's story.

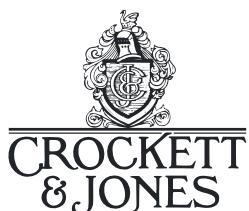
On this particular evening, the children were noisy and all over the place, high with excitement. They were often like that when it was windy outside, and there'd been a gale blowing all day. It was a bit like rounding up cats. We thought we'd just about managed it, and were doing a final count of heads, when I noticed that Ho was missing. Had anyone seen him? No. The teachers and I searched for him all over the house. No one could find him anywhere. Long minutes passed and still no sign of Ho. I was becoming more than a little worried. It occurred to me that someone might have upset him, and that Ho had run off, just as he had a few times back at school. Out there in the dark he could all too easily get himself lost and frightened. He was in his dressing gown and slippers the last time anyone saw him, that much we had established. But it was a very cold night outside. I was trying to control my panic when Michael walked in, manuscript in hand. He looked worried.

'I need to speak to you,' he was whispering to me so that others shouldn't hear. 'It's Ho.' My heart missed a beat. I followed him out of the room. 'Listen,' he said, 'before I read to the children, there's something I have to show you.' 'What?' I asked. 'What's happened? Is he all right?' 'He's fine,' Michael replied, walking me out. 'In fact, I'd say he's happy as Larry. He's outside. Come and have a look.' He put his fingers to his lips. 'We need to be quiet. I don't want him to hear us.'

And so it was that the two of us found ourselves treading softly through the darkness of the walled garden. It was so quiet, silent but for a dog barking down in the valley. We came into the yard. The stable door was open and the light was on. Michael put his hand on my arm. 'Look,' he whispered, 'Listen. That's Ho, isn't it?' Ho was standing there under the light stroking Hebe's neck, and talking to her softly. He was talking!

(Walker Books, £6.99)





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# Just what the doctor ordered

*The garden of the Royal College of Physicians, London NW1*

A decade on from its completion, Mark Griffiths describes his remaking of the medicinal garden for England's oldest medical college, on the edge of Regent's Park

Photographs by Marianne Majerus

**O**N November 5, 2003, I was shown around the garden of the Royal College of Physicians (RCP) on the eastern perimeter of London's Regent's Park. My guide was Sir Richard Thompson, at that time physician to The Queen and newly installed Treasurer of the College, and its President from 2010 to 2014. I was struck by several specimens that flourished on this site of just under an acre—a magnificent plane (*Platanus orientalis*) from Cos, where Hippocrates taught in the shade of this same species; towering *Drimys winteri*, the South American evergreen whose bark, collected by John Winter in the late 1570s, was used against scurvy; and a bountiful pomegranate, the fruit featured in the RCP's coat of arms.

These were survivors from plantings made years before, mainly by the college's then Garden Fellow Dr Arthur Hollman. For the most part, however, the grounds illustrated survival of the fittest rather than medicine, thick with *Anemone hupehensis*, *Brachyglottis Sunshine*



and other inglorious invincibles. It seemed a sorry setting for the Modernist masterpiece, opened in 1964, that is Sir Denys Lasdun's purpose-designed RCP building, the college's fifth headquarters since its founding by Royal Charter from Henry VIII in 1518.

A gifted gardener, Sir Richard was well aware of this and seeking a remedy. He asked what I would prescribe. The challenge was irresistible: medical

botany and ethnobotany, the study of humankind's relationship with plants, are longstanding interests of mine. Two days later, I wrote to him outlining the 'extraordinary opportunity' that the RCP had for creating an 'important educational and historical plant collection—a physic garden for the new century'.

Until well into the 19th century, plants provided the majority of substances



used in mainstream medicine and in non-conventional healing. They are, moreover, Nature's great chemical factories and the compounds they produce have given rise, *inter alia*, to significant modern anti-virals, anti-malarials and cancer medications.

I proposed that the RCP garden should contain medicinal plants from all over the planet. An impressive number would be of genuine efficacy

or instrumental in the development of useful drugs. These would include species that were deployed in native medicine, ritual, poisons and so on, in which science had discovered clinical potential: pharmaceutical breakthroughs have resulted from observing the use made of plants by people with no white coats.

I'd also include many species that were of no real benefit, although

**Thanks to its microclimate, the RCP garden contains medicinal plants from all over the planet, the Subtropics and Southern Hemisphere included**

once (and, in some cases, still) held to be therapeutic by dint of superstition, tradition and old orthodoxies such as the doctrine of signatures. These would be vital to the new garden's historical and anthropological narrative as illustrations of beliefs and practices in other times, places and cultures. Finally, there would be species that commemorated practitioners—for example, *Acanthus dioscoridis* ➤



and *Dodonaea viscosa*, named for Dioscorides and Rembert Dodoens.

The garden had to be beautiful as well as mean much. There are selections of numerous herbal and medicinal plants with decorative leaves and flowers (think of comfrey, sage, ground elder and betony). I would use such cultivars. I would also permit some species that had no medical association, purely for ornament's sake. Happily, few of these would be needed as, remarkably, many of our most prized ornamentals were originally considered medicinal in their native lands (and sometimes still are—think of China's flora and pharmacopoeia).

Unlike a classic physic garden, the RCP's plants would not be boxed into beds according to use or botanical affinities. I'd arrange them mostly by their places of origin, in broad geographical zones. This seemed the best solution to the puzzles posed by the site's fixed and peculiar layout. It would serve my ethnobotanical rationale and allow for plantings that were naturalistic, atmospheric and attractive. Significant survivors from the garden's earlier phases would remain. Apart from those few, the borders would be cleared, redesigned and replanted.

At the college's invitation, from January 2004 onwards, I produced

## ‘Plants are Nature’s great chemical factories’

estimates, selected species and made detailed planting plans. In December that year, the Wolfson Foundation, major benefactor of the RCP, generously agreed to support my proposal.

In 1587, John Gerard agreed to plant the college's first garden 'for favourable terms'. I'd done likewise. That meant cutting costs, which meant DIY and lots of it. In early 2005, I began commuting from Oxford to London with my partner, Yoko Otsuki. We spent day after day clearing the site, preparing the ground and planting and tending new accessions. When not labouring, we went on quests for species that hadn't been pursued with such urgency in centuries—a mandrake, say, or a dragon tree.

Our favourite nurseries entered into the spirit of this enterprise, dispatching lorry loads of plants to Regent's Park at greatly reduced prices. On a smaller scale and *gratis*, friends did the same, from Japanese botanists, who sent staples of Far Eastern herbalism, to Julian Ashby,

**In the purlieus  
of Hippocrates's  
plane tree,  
beds brim with  
plants used  
in European  
medicine, from  
Classical  
Antiquity to the  
modern era**

publisher of the *New RHS Dictionary of Gardening*, who plundered his Hampshire garden for snowdrops—*Galanthus*, to which medicine is indebted for the Alzheimer's treatment Galantamine.

The RCP garden occupies several separate and very different spaces. Before and beside the college's main frontage are massive, raised rectangular beds, retained by the same slate-black brick that is one of the building's signature materials.

From a design viewpoint, the most amenable was the outermost bed, which lay along a boundary wall. I devoted it to North America, massing golden grasses, *Echinacea* and other prairie flora at its sunny head and forest denizens along its shadier body. The remaining forecourt beds were more of a challenge. Abutting the Outer Circle of Regent's Park like a great green rampart, these were the RCP's most public plantings. They needed to please perennially and yet London planes overshadowed them.

I decided to use purely ornamental species in greater numbers here than elsewhere, making a long-banked woodland garden. European natives comprised its principal medicinal theme, among them *Pulmonaria*, *Hepatica*, *Helleborus* and *Veratrum*, but I allowed myself departures from the geographical



rule—for example, a trio of *Betula utilis* var. *jacquemontii* Silver Shadow in each bed. I chose this birch because its bark, as well as contrasting brilliantly with Lasdun's brick, is used in traditional Himalayan medicine.

To the rear of the college and embraced by it, deep informal borders surround a gently sloping lawn. The benign microclimate here allowed me to establish *Livistona chinensis*, *Cyathea medullaris*, *Yucca thompsoniana* (included as a rebus for Sir Richard) and many other exotics. These went into the longest border and its short-terraced sequel, a sweep that, as it ran from shade to full sun, I made travel from Asiatic jungle to South African veldt and American desert by way of a tree-fern grove carpeted with Australasian natives.

For the remaining rear beds, I looked to Europe, the Mediterranean and the Near East, creating collages of species used from Classical Antiquity to the present. Rich in roses, silver- and golden-leaved herbs and sculptural evergreens such as myrtle, laurel and cypress, these were the most pastel and perfumed of the new schemes and the closest in terms of their plant palette to what the college would have grown in the 16th century.

**Above:** Devoted to plants listed in the RCP's *Pharmacopoeia Londinensis* (1618), the eight front gardens of St Andrews Place form a single parterre, its diamond design inspired by Sir Thomas Browne's *The Garden of Cyrus*. **Above right:** A medley of 17th-century medicinals: damask and apothecary's roses, corn poppies, borage, marigolds and tamarisk



Obstacles came our way—a hosepipe ban at the height of our summer planting schedule; winter's unexpected return to its harsh and hoary old self—but these proved blessings of sorts. To be able to water it, I had to register it as a botanic garden, which, I now realised, it was becoming. And we found hurtling down the M40 with a car boot full of horticultural fleece a bracing, if unconventional, cure for Boxing Day torpor.

‘We went on quests for species such as a mandrake and a dragon tree’

By late May 2006, we'd planted some 700 taxa (species and varieties), often in groups and drifts. In other words, thousands of new plants had gone into the ground. My aim was for a total of about 1,200 taxa and I drew up further plans to accommodate them. One of these was for the row of front gardens that belonged to St Andrews Place, a splendid terrace of houses built by John Nash in the 1820s and now part of the RCP. Although they'd not been included in our original remit, I'd had designs for some time on these eight small squares of lawn partitioned by black-iron railings.

One of the greatest English prose writers, the physician Sir Thomas Browne, was an honorary FRCP. His treatise *The Garden of Cyrus* (1658) examines a motif found in Nature and in the plantings of the Ancients—five points which, when connected and repeated, produce a diamond-pane

pattern. My plan was to use box to make, in outline, one of these diamonds in each of the front gardens, with the row of eight functioning as a continuous parterre.

Each garden would have five compartments, one within the diamond, four without. These would be planted with species used in British medicine in the 17th century and especially those listed in *Pharmacopoeia Londinensis*, the standard directory of medicinal formulae and materials published by the college in 1618. In June, I produced a proposal to this effect for submission to the Wolfson Foundation, which kindly agreed to sponsor it.

By then, the rest of the garden was looking good enough for an official opening. We'd already given the delighted Lord and Lady Wolfson a private tour. My work for the college was now done and I could leave its upkeep and development to Dr Henry Oakeley and Jane Knowles, who'd been appointed Garden Fellow and Head Gardener.

A decade later, the collection totals some 1,100 taxa, diligently maintained and explained by two gardeners and four Garden Fellows. My plantings are flourishing. St Andrews Place is as I envisaged. True to plan, the RCP garden is both resort and resource: in it, to quote John Gerard, ‘the delight is great, but the use greater, and often joined with necessitie’. Could my illustrious predecessor wander there, I suspect he might agree. *The Royal College of Physicians, 11, St Andrews Place, London NW1 (www.rcplondon.ac.uk). To arrange a visit, email garden@rcplondon.ac.uk or telephone 020-3075 1200*



## Time for a stocktake

**G**ARDENS, like high-street stores, benefit from a spot of stock-taking now and then. It's a time to admit to failures, to bite the bullet and realise that what was once dogged determination and persistence on your part is now better categorised as 'flogging a dead horse'.

It pays to admit it to yourself when it becomes clear that a plant is never going to enjoy itself in your company or, more accurately, in your soil and situation. However, for every failure, there will be, God willing, a handful of successes. It's tempting to stick to tried-and-tested favourites—plants whose beauty you enjoy and which you know will thrive for you. They're known in the business as 'good doers' and we all need more than a handful of them in the garden.

However, discovering new plants and trying them out is what keeps us fresh and I commend to you a handful that have done well in my own garden this year, in the hope that, if you're not growing them yet, you will do so and find them every bit as rewarding as I have.

Top of the list is *Althaea cannabina*, which has the airy grace of *Verbena bonariensis*, but flowers that are like small hollyhocks studding the tall, wide and much-branched candelabra it produces from a perennial rootstock. Its common names are hemp-leaved hollyhock and palm-leaf marshmallow and it has thrived in my Isle of Wight garden,



**Hit of the season:** *Althaea cannabina* has elegant, pale-pink flowers

which is on heavy clay, although the top 9in has been ameliorated with grit and organic matter.

Each plant has produced between three and six stems in the second summer after planting and they're 7ft–8ft high, studded with elegant pale-pink flowers from July until September. They've been the hit of the season. The only drawback is that the stems

do benefit from some support, as they can be bowed down by heavy rains and wind. Just one stout bamboo cane pushed in among the group of stems, from which a single loop of Flexitie could be strung around each stem, 3ft from the ground, kept them upright all summer.

The plant is assured of its place as a permanent resident of my coastal garden and I'm tempted to grow more from seed—Chiltern Seeds in Cumbria ([www.chilternseeds.co.uk](http://www.chilternseeds.co.uk)) stocks them.

*Geranium maderense* has proved a great stalwart, too, producing its rosettes of feathery palmate leaves, topped with magenta-pink flowers and seeding itself around generously, if not quite so prolifically as that popular crevice filler *Erigeron karatavienense*, a tiny and obliging daisy that is seldom out of flower.

*Mahonias* leave me cold. Their yellow flower tassels can be a highlight of winter days, but I spent too long weeding among them in the dark shrubberies of public parks in my youth to hold them in lasting affection. Step forward *Mahonia* Soft Caress, a spineless variety with soft and ferny foliage on a shrub that will grow to about 5ft high and 3ft wide, carrying its yellow flowers in late summer or early autumn.

‘For every failure there will be, God willing, a handful of successes’

It's a perfect filler for a shady, sheltered spot, but the fresh green of its younger foliage makes it anything but drab. Shelter and dappled shade are key factors here, as in cold and exposed conditions, it will suffer.

I have also planted the relatively new form of false castor-oil palm, *Fatsia japonica* Spider's Web. This plant is an acquired taste. If you detest variegation in all its forms, move on. I was dubious myself, as the white speckling on the leaves can resemble a severe attack of red spider mite, but I've grown it for a couple of summers and it does bring a certain kind of light to beds and borders, as well as the valuable statuesque quality it offers to any garden right through the year.

I'll continue to give it space: its success or failure will probably be down to the plants that surround it and it does provide novelty value—something that keeps us all fresh.

**My Secret Garden** by Alan Titchmarsh is published by BBC Books (£25)

**Next week:** Whites for shade

### Horticultural aide memoire

#### No. 41: Plant winter containers

Pots, baskets and mangers can be planted now with decorative plant combinations to look good all winter. Useful evergreens include winter-flowering heathers and ivies, which can trail about pleasantly. Ferns of modest proportions confer a certain Classical sobriety. All this has to last for months, so ensure that form and foliage colour harmonise. A little more floral action can be introduced in early spring by the inclusion of a few snowdrops or a crocus such as Blue Pearl, but winter plantings are essentially quiet and harmonious, like the plumage of British birds. Explosions of colour come with spring plantings. **SCD**



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For food on the go

#### **Yolkin**

Satisfy your sweet tooth with Sammie Le's ice-cream *macaron* sandwiches (*above*). Check the website for pop-up locations ([www.yolkin.co.uk](http://www.yolkin.co.uk))

#### **Fins & Trotters**

The long queues in front of every stall are testament to its success, with guaranteed light, crispy batter and fantastically fresh fish ([www.facebook.com/FinsAndTrottersKitchen](http://www.facebook.com/FinsAndTrottersKitchen))

#### **Mountain's Boston Sausage,**

You'll work up an appetite deciding between the sausage-meat Boston Burger and famous Boston bap

Borough Market, SE1 (01205 362167; [www.bostonsausage.co.uk](http://www.bostonsausage.co.uk))

#### **Bonnie Gull Seafood Shack**

Foley Street, W1 (020-7436 0921; [www.bonniegullseafoodshack.com](http://www.bonniegullseafoodshack.com))

#### **Anna Mae's Mac 'n' Cheese**

([www.anna-maes.com](http://www.anna-maes.com))



## For brunch

#### **The Ivy Chelsea Garden (*above*)**

Has shown no sign of slowing down since opening in early 2015. Booking is essential—opt for a table in the winter conservatory.

**Order** The sesame-seasoned avocado-and-spinach Benedict  
*King's Road, SW3 (020-3301 0300); [www.theivycheulgarden.com](http://www.theivycheulgarden.com)*

#### **Grain Store**

Vegetables receive equal billing on each of the artfully presented

plates. Kick-start your morning with a brunch cocktail at the equally enticing bar.

**Order** The *kimchi* and minced-pork Chinese pancake

*Granary Square, N1 (020-7324 4466; [www.grainstore.com](http://www.grainstore.com))*

#### **Cecconi's**

A modern-day institution, where the pasta-heavy brunch menu is too often overlooked.

**Order** Zucchini flowers, anchovies and mozzarella *cicchetti*

*Burlington Gardens, W1 (020-7434 1500; [www.cecconis.co.uk](http://www.cecconis.co.uk))*

#### **Nopi**

**Order** The *shakshuka*

*Warwick Street, W1 (020-7494 9584; [www.ottolenghi.co.uk/nopi](http://www.ottolenghi.co.uk/nopi))*

#### **The Modern Pantry**

**Order** The coconut waffle

*St John's Square, EC1, and Finsbury Square, EC2 ([www.themodernpantry.co.uk](http://www.themodernpantry.co.uk))*

## Working lunch

#### **Scott's**

Never out of fashion, it continues to embody perfectly prepared, simple food and elegant design. **Order** The Whitfield estate grouse  
*Mount Street, W1 (020-7495 7309; [www.scotts-restaurant.com](http://www.scotts-restaurant.com))*

#### **Roast**

Ask for a table next to the window with views over Borough Market, where many of the ingredients are sourced. **Order** The pork belly  
*Stoney Street, SE1 (020-3006 6111; [www.roast-restaurant.com](http://www.roast-restaurant.com))*

#### **Lutyens**

Designed by Sir Edward Lutyens and located inside the former Reuters building, the restaurant boasts characteristically Conran, Art Deco-inspired interiors. **Order** From the business-lunch menu  
*Fleet Street, EC4 (020-7583 8385; [www.lutyens-restaurant.com](http://www.lutyens-restaurant.com))*

#### **Café Murano**

**Order** The lamb *pappardelle* with Pugliese olives  
*St James's, SW1, and Tavistock Street, WC2 ([www.cafemurano.co.uk](http://www.cafemurano.co.uk))*

#### **Caraffini**

**Order** The *calamari con peperoncini*

*Lower Sloane Street, SW1 (020-7259 0235; [www.caraffini.co.uk](http://www.caraffini.co.uk))*

## For pub grub

### **Harwood Arms**

London's only Michelin-starred pub focuses on British game and wild food. **Order** The black-pudding scotch egg  
*Walham Grove, SW6 (020-7386 1847; www.harwoodarms.com)*

*Berwick Street, W1 (020-3327 7888; www.theduckandrice.com)*

### **Riverford at The Duke of Cambridge**

Riverford has teamed up with this north London institution to create Britain's only certified organic pub. **Order** Macaroni cheese, with greens and basil  
*St Peter's Street, N1 (020-7359 3066; www.dukeorganic.co.uk)*

### **The Duck & Rice**

This Chinese gastro-pub boasts a wealth of Cantonese-style comfort food. **Order** The wasabi prawns

### **Fox & Pie**

**Order** The homemade pies  
*Stoke Newington, N1 (020-7254 6455; www.foxandpie.com)*

### **The Tommy Tucker**

**Order** The monkfish vindaloo  
*Waterford Road, SW6 (020-7736 1023; www.thetommytucker.com)*

### **The Crooked Billet**

**Order** The Dorset lamb medallions  
*Wimbledon Common, SW19 (020-8946 4942; www.thecrookedbilletwimbledon.com)*

## For Sunday lunch

### **Hawksmoor (above)**

Show-stealing interiors worthy of what is arguably London's best steakhouse. Don't miss the duck-fat roasted potatoes  
*Multiple locations (www.thehawksmoor.com)*

### **Blacklock**

Prepare for the week with a martini and a leg of Cornish lamb  
*Great Windmill Street, W1 (020-3441 6996; www.theblacklock.com)*

### **Smokehouse**

Canary Wharf, E1 (020-7400 1144; www.smokehouseislington.co.uk)

### **The Orange**

Pimlico Road, SW1 (020-7881 9844; www.theorange.co.uk)

### **The Truscott Arms**

Shirland Road, W9 (020-7266 9198; www.thetruscottarms.com)

## For new openings

### **Nutbourne**

The Gladwin brothers—Richard, Oliver and Gregory—now have a restaurant apiece since Nutbourne opened in September. Following Rabbit in Chelsea and The Shed in Notting Hill, it showcases similar rural-inspired ingredients and a 14-seat butcher's table, overlooking the open grill  
*Ransomes Dock, SW11 (020-7350 0555; www.nutbourne-restaurant.com)*

### **Frenchie**

The first British outpost of Gregory Marchand's popular Parisian empire

*Henrietta Street, WC2 (020-7836 4422; www.frenchiecoventgarden.com)*

dining room now lies behind the infamous stained-glass windows, with a dedicated members' space and restaurant on the first floor  
*Dean Street, W1 (020-7437 9585; www.quovadissoho.co.uk)*

### **Margot**

There will be a heavy emphasis on customer service when rustic Italian Margot—the brainchild of former Bar Boulud *maître d'* Paulo de Tarso and Nicolas Jaouën of La Petite Maison—opens this month. Try the crab *tagliolini* (above)

*Great Queen Street, WC2 (www.margotrestaurant.com)*

### **Foley's**

Known for its eclectic menu and intimate atmosphere, it's best to book early to secure a spot at the open kitchen or alfresco coffee bar.

**Order** The cornflake-crusted

popcorn chicken

*Foley Street, W1 (020-3137 1302; www.foleysrestaurant.co.uk)*

### **Aquavit**

On track for being launched next month, Aquavit aims to offer the best of Nordic cuisine and design

*Carlton Street, SW1 (www.aquavitrestaurants.com)*

### **Quo Vadis**

In its 90th year, but has just reopened after refurbishment. A new

## For fine dining

### **Little Social**

London has an enduring love affair with French bistro dining, but, unlike its competitors, Little Social's tea-stained walls and cosy leather banquets belie a deceptively British menu.

**Order** The *côtes de porc* (right)

*Pollen Street, W1 (020-7870 3730; www.littlesocial.co.uk)*

menus, made up of 'chapters' that can reach into double figures. **Order** The Full Story dinner menu

*Tooley Street, SE1 (020-7183 2117; www.restaurantstory.co.uk)*

### **The Ritz Restaurant at The Ritz London**

**Order** The turbot with chestnuts, truffle and Champagne

*Piccadilly, W1 (020-7493 8181; www.theritzlondon.com/dining-drinks/ritz-restaurant)*

### **Kitty Fisher's**

**Order** The beef sirloin onion

*Shepherd Market, W1 (020-3302 1661; www.kittifishers.com)*

### **Corrigan's**

**Order** Corrigan's game pie

*Upper Grosvenor Street, W1 (020-7499 9943; www.corrigansmayfair.co.uk)*

John Michaels/Winston Link/Alamy; The Duck & Rice

www.countrylife.co.uk

Country Life, October 12, 2016 77

## For an occasion

### The Goring

Best for father-and-son outings.  
Makes a mean lobster omelette  
*Beeston Place, SW1 (020-7396 9000; www.thegoring.com)*



### Duck & Waffle

Admire the mellow, winter sunrise from a 40th-floor perch  
*Bishopsgate, EC2 (020-3640 7310; https://duckandwaffle.com)*

### 45 Jermyn Street

Best for a favourite godchild  
*St James's, SW1 (020-7205 4545; www.45jermynst.com)*

### Berners Tavern at London Edition Hotel

Best for surprising your other half  
*Berners Street, W1 (020-7908 7979; www.bernerstavern.com)*

### Rules

Best for your grandfather's 80th birthday  
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**Order** The seared beef carpaccio  
*Gillingham Street, SW1 (020-7769 9771; www.tozirestaurant.co.uk)*

### Kricket

**Order** The Keralan fried chicken  
*Brixton Station Road, SW9 (www.kricket.co.uk)*

### Salt Yard

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### Portrait at the National Portrait Gallery

**Watch** *The Entertainer* at the Garrick Theatre (until November 12)

*St Martin's Place, WC2 (020-7312 2490; www.npg.org.uk/visit/shop-eat-drink/restaurant.php)*

### Spring Restaurant at Somerset House

**Watch** *The Lion King* at The Lyceum Theatre

*Lancaster Place, WC2 (020-3011 0115; www.springrestaurant.co.uk)*

### Hix Soho

**Watch** *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time* at The Gielgud Theatre (until February 18, 2017)

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# The foot of Hercules

*Tallow Chandlers' Hall,  
London EC4*

The livery halls were the first public buildings in the City to be reconstructed after the Great Fire in 1666.

Anya Matthews looks at one surviving hall from the period to find out why

Photographs by Will Pryce

**F**AMOUSLY, the Great Fire, which burned from September 2–5, 1666, destroyed a huge swathe of the City. The litany of buildings lost in the disaster rapidly became a feature of contemporary accounts and remains a commonplace of modern histories of the event: 13,000 houses, 400 streets, 87 churches, the City gates, the Royal Exchange, Newgate prison, Bridewell, the Sessions House, the Guildhall and St Paul's. Forty-four Halls belonging to livery Companies also lay in ashes. These were the headquarters of the City's guilds, corporate bodies that developed from the late Middle Ages to regulate trades and crafts. As John Evelyn noted in his diary on September 6: 'All... the Companies Halls, sumptuous buildings, arches, entries, [were] all in dust.'

The trauma of fire was followed by a huge reconstruction effort. An inscription on the Monument erected to the Fire in 1669 declared, rather optimistically: 'Haste is seen everywhere, London rises again, whether with greater speed or greater magnificence is doubtful, three short years complete that which was considered the work of an age.' The surveying of thousands of plots and some reconstruction had been accomplished by 1669, but thousands of houses, as well as the City's public edifices and churches, remained unbuilt. Construction of the latter would continue well into the 1680s. >

**Fig 1:** The hall laid in preparation for a feast. The screen, commissioned in 1674 and since reconfigured, copies that of the Goldsmiths





By contrast, the rebuilding of the livery Halls did justify some of the inscription's hyperbole and deserve that double distinction of speed and magnificence. Of the 44 Halls burnt in the Fire, eight had been reconstructed by 1669, 10 more by 1670 and three-quarters by 1673. None of these post-Fire Halls remains wholly intact. Many were lost to bombing in 1940 and substantial fabric from the period survives in only six today. Through a narrow, barrel-vaulted passage off Dowgate Hill stands arguably the best-preserved and most evocative: that of the Tallow Chandlers.

That Companies such as the Tallow Chandlers (chartered by Edward IV in 1462) were such energetic builders after the Great Fire seems surprising. The 16th century has been regarded as the high watermark of guild power and influence, but historians have tended to characterise the Companies post 1600 as medieval anachronisms, reconciled to their own demise. The age of the Stuarts undoubtedly brought challenges: guild authority was under threat from the growth of extramural London where corporate powers could be evaded, as well as specific events such as the Civil War and so-called *quo warranto* proceedings seeking to question corporate privileges.

## ‘The Tallow Chandlers’ Hall is the best preserved and most evocative’

Prior to the fire, the City was a variegated and densely packed place in which the handsome merchants' houses of Aldermanbury jostled with the filthy tenements of Aldgate. It was onto this finely grained environment that the Companies had grafted themselves. On securing a charter, or sometimes in hopes of being granted one, the Companies tended to acquire and convert courtyard town houses. It was consequently around this domestic building type—with a dominating hall and withdrawing apartments opening off it—that their corporate activities and rituals evolved.

The hall, from which these complexes took their name, expressed in architecture the identity of the company and was used for its public gatherings, such as feasts. This typically sat behind the principal elevation of the inner courtyard at ground, or sometimes first-floor, level. Usually separating the courtyard from the street was a row of income-generating shops or tenements. As they do today, each livery Company admitted members by patrimony, redemption or servitude and its hierarchy was governed by a Court of Assistants headed by the Master and Wardens. The Assistants were the oligarchic



*Fig 2 above: The 1670s parlour with its panelling and doorcase. Fig 3 facing page: The entrance courtyard. The hall is at first-floor level and has a row of round upper windows*

grandees and used the Court room or Court parlour as their base for the despatch of business. This was typically a withdrawing chamber adjoining the dais end of the hall. The liverymen's status was reflected in their right to wear gowns lined and trimmed with satin and fur.

All records for the period immediately after the ‘most deplorable’ Fire of September 1666 convey a profound sense of shock and dislocation at the destruction done. Plans for rebuilding presented to Charles II by Christopher Wren and John Evelyn in the week following the Fire would have seen the City’s erratic medieval street plan swept away in favour of a more uniform plan of avenues, rond-points and *piazzas*. The manoeuvring of the livery Halls was key to both plans, but neither materialised and the Companies stayed resolutely on their pre-Fire sites.

Hall-building projects proceeded remarkably swiftly, despite the heavy financial demands that had been placed on the Companies by both Crown and Parliament in the preceding decades and the loss of rental income in the Fire. The Acts for Rebuilding did not provide funding for the Halls’ reconstruction as they did for churches and major public buildings; this went ahead largely thanks to myriad small subscriptions from the Companies’ rank and file.

The Tallow Chandlers began their rebuilding project in January 1668, commissioning four houses on the street front of their Hall site to designs by the leading City carpenter and surveyor Edward Jerman. Once rented, these helped fund reconstruction of the complex behind, although the Company was still

obliged to borrow £3,000. Economies were inevitable and the carpenter William Stanton was requested to make the street door case ‘of good Oken Timber well carved and not of stone’ yet ‘in sure manner and for the honor of the Company’.

On Jerman’s death in November 1668, the master bricklayer Capt John Caine took over as surveyor and it was to his designs that the Hall proper was built. Caine was then also working under the surveyor and joiner Thomas Whiting at Brewers’ Hall, near Cripplegate. Photographs of that building (destroyed in 1940) indicate that Caine borrowed heavily from Whiting’s designs; in particular, the principal elevation’s arrangement of segmental arches on Tuscan columns, beneath two neat rows of square-headed and round windows.

Progress was slow until, in November 1670, ‘several livery men being desirous to promote and encourage the rebuilding of this Companies Comon Hall did freely subscribe towards the rebuilding’. The following June, it ‘was unanimously agreed that the carcasse of this Companies publique hall shalbe erected and carried up with as much expedicon as conveniently may’.

The impetus came, as in all the Companies, from a dedicated committee for rebuilding comprising a handful of enthusiastic liverymen. One of this committee’s tasks was to select the best ‘patterns’ and ‘models’ for building and fitting up. Competitive comparison—particularly emulation of the greater Companies by the lesser—was common. The Tallow >





**Fig 4:** The Court room opens off the main stair to the hall and is furnished to accommodate the ceremonial of the livery company

Chandlers, jostling with the Barber-Surgeons for ‘the seventeenth place of rank and degree’, seem to have been particularly alert on this score. When commissioning their new hall screen (**Fig 1**) from the leading joiner John Symes in 1674, they instructed that it should ‘have a front as is in the plot drawne for the Upper end of Goldsmiths Hall’. In so doing, it was aspiring to one of the City’s most prestigious models.

Occasionally, a civic grandee with political ambitions stepped in and paid for the fitting up of a specific room. At Tallow Chandlers’ Hall, this role was fulfilled, in 1675, by the high Tory Lord Mayor Sir Joseph Sheldon (nephew of Gilbert, Archbishop of Canterbury, who built the Sheldonian Theatre at Oxford). Sheldon defrayed the cost of wainscotting the very fine extant Hall parlour (**Fig 2**) and ‘treated’ with the joiner (probably Symes again) directly. His arms fill a festooned cartouche breaching the pediment of the sham doorcase at the room’s east end. The room’s chimneypiece has a fine, carved bay-leaf architrave (apparently a favourite feature of Symes’s, found also at Vintners’ Hall), an acanthus frieze and an overmantel crowned with the Stuart royal arms and carved festoons.

The Companies’ response to the completion of their new buildings was, unsurprisingly, one of enormous relief. The Halls were at the centre of restored civic order and ritual and the Tallow Chandlers’ Court noted proudly on Lord Mayor’s Day, 1671, that the livery was able to dine ‘att and in their new rebuilded Comon Hall’. The Halls might be ‘new

rebuilded’, but, as far as the Companies were concerned, they were still ancient in essence.

The Tallow Chandlers, like most Companies, replicated its pre-Fire courtyard plan and re-created the arrangement of screening the hall from the street. This gave the street gate a particularly important symbolic function, which carried with it an expectation of ornament; scrollwork, festoons, swags, garlanded ionic capitals, swan-necks and over-sized coats of arms under shell hoods were among the devices deployed. Such frontispieces operated as an index of what lay beyond.

## ‘Now, 350 years after the Great Fire, the flame of history is unextinguished’

Indeed, the 18th-century topographer John Strype (for whom the Tallow Chandlers’ was ‘a very neat building’) likened the relationship of Hall complex to street gate to the way ‘Hercules body may be judged by his foot’.

Subsequent centuries have seen the Tallow Chandlers’ headquarters altered, but not beyond recognition to those who commissioned and built them. The street range was redeveloped in the late 19th century, truncating the inner courtyard (**Fig 3**) of tuck-pointed red brick by a bay. Inside, the main staircase was entirely rebuilt in about 1900, although some

of the original twisted balusters survive on the uppermost storey. The hall room’s ceiling is mid 19th century, but a plausible evocation of the original by the Company’s post-Fire plasterer, John Blount. The glass in the hall’s archaising oriel carries the arms of 19 Companies made homeless by enemy action and was added in 1969, shortly after the removal of the musicians’ gallery. Only the room’s main windows, which were filled with stained glass in 1903, significantly disrupt an interior otherwise redolent of the Restoration.

The Tallow Chandlers continue to make embellishments to their building and its fittings; for example, this summer has seen the Hall’s chandeliers replaced by Madson Black of Bicester. Company activity—led by the present Master, Richard Fleck, and Clerk, Brigadier David Homer—evolves and yet evokes corporate origins in imaginative ways. There may be fewer chandlers among the Company’s 120 freemen and 180 liverymen, but there are members of BP and the Oils and Fats trade, who provide power and provision to 21st-century Britain. Charitable activity continues to underpin corporate life. Education is a priority and the Company has formal affiliations with schools in Hornsey and Greenwich. Company business is still despatched by gowned assistants from the benches of the wainscotted Court room (**Fig 4**), where prospective freemen still wait nervously at the bar for admission to the ranks. Now, 350 years since the Great Fire burnt out, the flame of several centuries of history remains unextinguished.



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# The art of enamel magic

Clive Aslet discovers the alchemy of the enameller and the delicate craftsmanship involved in creating items of such irresistible luminosity

Photographs by Richard Cannon

**I**'VE always just loved the colour,' explains Jane Short. She's in her studio, which occupies the front two rooms of a house in Brighton, a space that is part alchemist's study, part chemist's shop. There are dozens of engraver's burins, numerous pairs of pliers, several kilns, many books and sketches and a couple of hundred pots of glass 'lump'. For what she describes as 'down the rabbit hole' pieces, she straps magnifiers and lights to her head, using equipment one would normally associate with surgeons.

Jane is an enameller who, this year, was awarded an MBE for her contribution to the craft. 'It's about putting ground glass onto a metal,' she says disarmingly. One look at her studio tells you that there's more to it than that. 'Enamoured', an exhibition opening

today at the Goldsmiths' Centre, London EC1, will display the many ravishing effects that can be achieved using techniques that, in some cases, date back to the second millennium BC.

Enamel glows. The colours—flaming reds, autumnal russets, ultramarine blues, egg-yolk yellows, sappy greens, perhaps made even more sumptuous by the application of gold—have a luminosity that can only be compared to stained glass. Enamellers can take advantage of the unique fluidity of their medium, as a result of the melting of the hot glass.

The scale can be big—in the 19th century, signs were often made of enamel, a durable material that didn't fade (the London Underground roundel still is)—but, these days, enamel is more commonly employed to decorate silver or make jewellery.

Don't think about becoming an enameller unless you're neat, precise, reasonably tidy and very, very patient. 'A lot of it is very time consuming,' Jane tells me. 'It isn't something you can rush. Fortunately, I feel less need to rush as I get older.'

Jane currently favours the *champlevé* method. This involves engraving a piece of silver—those burins—with a design of different depths. To do this, the silver is attached to a wooden stump, which is then clamped in a vice. Beware the tiny mites of silver that fly from the end of the burin: 'They can be extremely painful if they get into your shoes and stuck in your foot.'

Then, the colours are selected. Jane has been collecting lump glass since she was a student in the 1970s; some of it is irreplaceable, either because the company that made it has disappeared ➤

**Above:**  
**The beauty of enamel lies within its vibrant colour: a selection of Jane Short's pieces.**  
**Facing page:**  
**Enamelling is not for the ill-tempered, as the process is very delicate and requires intricate craftwork**



or the toxic ingredients, such as the uranium and cadmium that used to go into some yellows, have been banned. Amber lump looks like shards of Fox's Glacier Mints, but turns a warm tan on firing; a milky glaze can be used to give opalescence.

Jane grinds it up very finely, with a pestle and mortar. Mixed with water, the colour is then floated onto the silver, using the traditional implement: a quill. Most of the water is carefully floated off using a cloth—a mote of misplaced dust or grease at this point could ruin the result, hence the need, difficult to achieve in a studio, for clean surfaces—and the piece is ready for the kiln.

## ‘Amber lump looks like shards of Fox’s Glacier Mints, but turns a warm tan on firing’

This, after what might be days or weeks of preparation, is the exciting part. Jane lights a Bunsen burner. Above it is a small box—the smallest of her kilns—and, in a few minutes, it has achieved the right temperature: very hot (somewhere between 650°C and 1,000°C). The little piece that I see being fired only stays in for a minute—even big pieces are finished in 10 minutes. ‘Leave it in too long and the silver will melt.’

As the piece cools before our eyes, the colours change and settle into their permanent hues. They will be radiant due to the facets of cut silver beneath



**‘It’s not something you can rush,’ says Jane, who has just been awarded an MBE for her services to the craft**

the surface of the glass, which reflects back the light. Different depths of glass will vary the richness of the colour and deeper shades can be achieved by adding more layers. Once the colours have been applied, the piece will be sanded to remove excess glass, then fired again, perhaps polished by hand, or left matte. The exhibition will show a cream jug that Jane has made, expressing the qualities of ‘rich, unctuous cream’.

Another technique that Jane practises is *cloisonné*, in which the enameller creates little pockets divided by wire that serves as the leading in stained glass—it takes an acutely skilful hand as the wire divisions can be of exquisite delicacy. For broad effects, ground glass can be sieved on a surface treated with gum. Although *champlevé* is finished to provide a smooth surface, sieving achieves a different tactile effect, due to the variegation, which can include flecks of gold or the barbaric splendour of gold leaf. Recently, Jane decorated a series of beakers using sieved enamel for the Scottish silversmith Malcolm Appleby.

To understand the mysteries of *plique-à-jour*, I go to a mews in Camden Town, the workspace for

Frances Loyen and her silversmith husband, Hector Miller, a past Prime Warden of the Goldsmiths’ Company. In this technique, glass is flowed into a design made by perforations. This process sounds nothing short of heart-breaking: much of the ground glass will, on first firing, fall out of the holes. However, this is to be expected and more success will be had in the next firing, when more of the glass adheres to what is already there.

The beauty of the technique is that the colours are translucent. Somebody lucky enough to drink from a goblet decorated with *plique-à-jour* will have the additional pleasure of seeing them from the other side.

At the exhibition, Frances will show a piece she and Hector made: a claret jug with an ingenious handle in the form of a beak rendered in *champlevé* that clicks into position (when upright, it serves as a long, decorated stopper).

Enamelling, Frances explains, is not for the faint of spirit: ‘You have to be quite disciplined—there are rules to follow—but I like to be spontaneous with colour.’

*‘Enamoured’ is at The Goldsmiths’ Centre, 42, Britton Street, London EC1, until November 18 ([www.goldsmithe-centre.org](http://www.goldsmithe-centre.org))*  
*The British Society of Enamellers (<http://enamellers.org>)*

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# Magic with mushrooms

From sautéing slimy wood blewits with garlic and cream to shaping tempura parasols, mycologist John Wright knows all the tricks for cooking champion *champignon* dishes

**M**AY I assume you know that some mushrooms will have you spending time in a small room contemplating your folly and that 25 will cheerfully kill you? Good. All will be well. Here, I will mention only fungi that are easy to recognise; most are unmistakeable. Really.

Let us put morbid concerns aside for the moment and contemplate instead some of the many ways in which wild mushrooms may be cooked. I've always been a conservative when it comes to preparing fungi—

‘Although the difference in flavour between mushrooms is subtle, it’s the texture that really guides the cook,’

a quick fry-up in butter—but experimentation and the inspiration of others has shown me that a well-balanced dish can enhance, rather than mask, the flavour of these incomparable treasures. And mushrooms, being one of the *umami* ingredients, can enhance the flavour of an entire dish.

Although the difference in flavour between mushrooms is mostly subtle, it’s the texture that really guides the cook. They can be soft and crumbly, soft and rubbery, fibrous or a little slippery/slidy (in a good way). The slimiest of all mushrooms



*Left to right: The penny bun, the Paris mushroom, the parasol mushroom, the chanterelle or girolle and the horn of plenty*

is the late-autumn wood blewit—at least, when cooked. As such, it's my favourite for classic sautéed mushrooms with garlic and cream. The slightly floral flavour matches the garlic perfectly. Sticky, slimy, garlicky, creamy, flowery—a simple joy.

Mushrooms don't appear all year round, so it's good to have these reminders of misty-morning forays stored in the larder. Most mushrooms will dry and reconstitute well (hedgehog mushrooms being an exception—they reconstitute like wine corks), so leftover mushrooms, stems of ceps and birch boletes and mushrooms I just don't know what to do with go into my electric food drier. I then reduce them to a fine powder, which will make a guest appearance in almost every savoury dish I make, usually with some dried seaweed (another *umami* ingredient) to keep it company.

If you want to make the best mushroom powder, then use ceps and (especially) the sometimes elusive and totally black horn of plenty. The latter goes well in an omelette, provided you don't mind your eggs grey.

Pickled wild mushrooms are worth a try, too, if for no other reason than to amusingly

frighten guests. The best pickler is that much-hated ruination of previously immaculate lawns, the fairy-ring *champignon*. Discard the tough stems, salt the caps for an hour, drain, repeat and wash thoroughly, but very quickly. Blanch in a little cider vinegar for 20 seconds, drain, place in a jar and cover with your oil of choice.

The statuesque parasol mushroom troops across fields in vast numbers in the autumn, tempting even the most restrained of foragers to pick more than they can carry. Even a single specimen can be too much—the largest I ever encountered was 15in in diameter and I reminisce about it as if it were a dream. Yes, I do dream about mushrooms. ➤

## Fungi facts

### Wood blewit

Large mushroom of late autumn, woodland, sometimes rings in fields. Purple all over when young. Soft, sticky/slimy. Fragrant when cooked.

### Horn of plenty

Posh cousin of the chanterelle, entirely black with a superb, intense flavour.

### Fairy-ring *champignon*

A humble garden or pasture fungus. Small, pale orange and delicious.

### Parasol mushroom

A large and tall mushroom of grassland. Delicate flavour, fibrous.

### Brittlegills woodlands

Short of stem, often bright cap colours.

Crumbly texture.

A difficult-to-identify species. Some mildly poisonous.

### Field and horse mushrooms

Grow on grassland. Sweet and nutty when young, bitter when mature.

### Chanterelle

Bright yellow. Found with oak, beech and pine. Firm texture, smells of apricots.

### Cep

Large mushroom of oak and beech. Firm, not fibrous, except the stem. The most versatile of all the mushrooms.

### Chicken of the woods

Enormous, bright-yellow bracket found on oak and sometimes sweet chestnut. Mild but pleasant flavour, slight fibrous texture.



When lightly cooked to preserve the flavour and texture, chanterelle mushrooms are at their best sautéed and served whole

In tempura batter, parasols are perfect—crunchy/crispy outside, melted mushroom within. Any attempt to fry them, however, will result in a mushroom-flavoured dishcloth.

Texture is more important in a salad than in cooked food, so slippery/slimy isn't to be considered and most mushrooms require cooking to release their flavour. Brittlegills, however, are at their very best raw. They're brittle/crumbly all over with a delightful nutty/mushroomy flavour. Some are very peppery and gently poisonous, but the mild ones are good to eat and safe—enabling the brave to decide which to collect by taking a very small nibble. Be warned—this trick only works with brittlegills, so get your guidebooks out.

The only species collected in Britain until very recently were the field and horse mushroom. They're nearly always fried or grilled with butter—a simple and unsurpassable dish, provided all the water is boiled away in the pan so that the mushrooms can sizzle and brown. Victorian cookbooks, however, are of the opinion that the only thing worth doing with them is to make ketchup. A glut of mushrooms will have you scratching around for something to do with the damn things and this is the thing. Traditionally, it's black and only the spores of field and horse mushrooms will provide the required colour

‘Like a crock of gold nestling on the trunk of an oak tree, chicken of the woods always inspires wonderment’

(shaggy inkcaps are edible with black spores, but they taste like boiled polystyrene).

The idea is to chop finely some mature mushrooms and mix them with salt (about a dessert spoon to 2lb), then cover them for four hours to allow the salt to extract the mushroom juice. The whole is boiled in a pan with shallots, spices such as cinnamon and cloves plus cider vinegar. Once cool, strain through muslin into bottles.

Surprisingly, field and horse mushrooms are among the most treacherous to identify because they have a near double in the yellow stainer. Fortunately, these aren't deadly, content with providing you with an action-packed 24 hours of discomfort. Although very similar to the field mushroom, they bruise an instant bright yellow on rubbing and smell of TCP when cooked.

For sheer visual delight and delicacy of flavour, the chanterelle is unbeatable. It requires light cooking to preserve the

flavour and the texture, which quickly becomes tough if overdone. These may be used in a tart, but simply sautéed and served whole shows them at their best.

The cep isn't called the king of mushrooms for nothing. It's nutty and slightly sticky when cooked, with the most intense flavour of all the large mushrooms. Unlike the chanterelle, it requires at least 10 minutes in the pan for the flavour to be realised. The best soup I ever made (bar a shore-crab bisque) was with ceps—thick, creamy and overwhelmingly intense. My fellow forager, Monica Wilde, adds walnuts to hers.

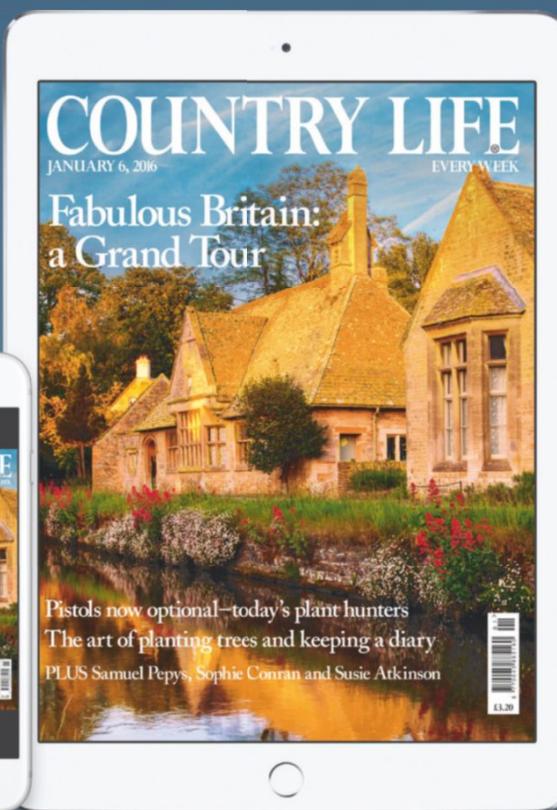
Like a crock of gold nestling on the trunk of an oak tree, chicken of the woods always inspires wonderment. Only the thin edge bears eating, but it is truly worth it. Just slice a little off the edge of a few of the tiers and leave the rest to produce its spores. Its name comes from a not too fanciful comparison with chicken, as it's soft and slightly fibrous. Another comparison is with tofu—except that it actually tastes of something: mushroom. These give a key to how it might be used in a curry, a quiche, a cream, a cheese sauce or...   
*You must pick and eat only those specimens that you're completely sure are edible. Seek advice or get hold of at least two guidebooks, including the author's 'River Cottage Handbook No.1 Mushrooms' (Bloomsbury, £13.49)*

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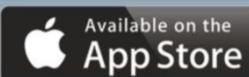
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**O**NE afternoon, about 10 years ago, with a strong feeling that I was doing something illegal, I climbed over a gate by Blackfriars Bridge and down to the banks of the Thames. The muddy brown water was out almost to the first pier, revealing a wide rocky beach. It was thrilling to walk along, transgressive (although it turned out to be perfectly lawful) and surprisingly quiet. A lonely, empty space in the middle of this vast, turbulent city.

I turned my gaze to my feet and discovered not only the architectural waste of centuries, but fragments of pottery, glass and dozens of clay tobacco-pipe stems. I bent down to pick one up and pulled away an undamaged pipe bowl, perfectly moulded into the shape of a horse's hoof. From that moment, I was in love with the river and its treasures (see book reviews, page 106).

‘It once referred to the untouchables of society scraping a living,’

The Thames is essential to our conception of London, a psychological division between north and south, a source of solace and calm. I find that, when I walk over a London bridge, I give an involuntary sigh of relief as all my tensions are momentarily carried away by the flow beneath me.

Two thousand years of residents, businesses and shipping have all left their traces on the foreshore. Anything that was swept into a drain, thrown overboard or dumped on the shore could find itself preserved in thick black mud, to be released, occasionally, and found, serendipitously, by those who walk the beaches. It's a home for some, transport for others and, when the tide goes out, a playground and an archaeological site for that species of Londoner known as a mudlark.

Mudlarking is an old occupation. It once referred to the untouchables of society scraping a living by picking up the scrap of London's industry. They spent their days hunched over, in what was then a giant open sewer, searching for coal, copper or rope, whatever could be resold for some desultory value.

# Just mudlarking about

Combing or ‘mudlarking’ the banks of the Thames used to be a miserable, sordid occupation. Now, it thrillingly brings to life the city’s colourful past, reports Ted Sanderling

In his diary of 1861, Arthur Joseph Munby described how a ‘young woman, with simious face and creel on back, stood by me as I looked over the rails down the Whitefriars dock, considering her chances of stray coal; then... she waded through mire and water, among dead cats and broken crockery’.

The name mudlark has since passed to those who search the foreshore for pleasure rather than survival. Mudlarking has become a way for the contemporary Londoner to connect with the city’s past, to reach across the boundaries of time and touch something that has been untouched for hundreds of years, sharing a sensation across centuries. Which is where I come in. That poor young woman’s broken crockery has transmuted into my treasure.

Mudlarking, for me, was a side effect of my explorations of London and yet, from it, I’ve had some of my most evocative encounters with the city. I love to find fragments with just the smallest hints of writing on them and trace them back to their origins in a feast of detective work. A shard of glass, say, with a just decipherable ‘...nwaring/..eckham’ was transformed with delicious research into a bottle of Royal Naval Pickle, made by Manwaring, Peckham, and displayed in the 1911 Festival of Empire. I’ve found a mysterious brass capsule containing a tight scroll of copper with arcane markings (it turned out to be



**The River Thames throws up treasure and trinkets with delightful regularity, each telling a little bit more about the history of London**

a Ceylonese suraya, a holy talisman) and a Frozen Charlotte doll (named after a tragic American folk song).

Meeting a smartly dressed man on Wapping beach, I discovered the addictive quality of picking Tudor pins from the sands. Each one a sharp shaft of brass wire, another length wrapped round the top for a head. And these processes, pinched between my fingers, brought the writings of Adam Smith to life.

My companion held up a £20 note and I read for the first time upon it ‘The division of labour in pin manufacturing: (and the great increase in the quantity of work that results)’. One man would make 20 pins a day; 10 men could make 50,000.

After every trip to the river, I know a little more than I did before and I have touched history. All you need are wellies. Give it a try.



## Five favourite finds

### Horse's-hoof pipe

The original pipe—the piece that hooked me on mudlarking. It showed not only that there are fascinating historical objects to be found, even by the casual amateur, but that these objects could be beautiful, perfectly designed and gorgeously detailed. I've

since picked up many clay pipes, but none that I prize as much as this.

### Plate

I seek out pottery by the river, but not every fragment, particularly of 19th-century printed wares, can be tied to a manufacturer. This one is different. An encounter in the British Museum enabled

me to identify this as the Japanese Crane Pattern, by Christopher Dresser for Minton, made in about 1880.

### 20th-century head

I love that no two people can agree what this animal head represents. Is it a bear? A teddy bear? A cat, a dog, a monkey or a koala? All those have been claimed

and more—my money's on the teddy.

### Flint flake

Much of what I find is post-medieval, but this is the oldest manmade piece in my collection. It's from the border of the Mesolithic and the Neolithic, perhaps as many as 8,000 years old and still sharp as a needle

### Raspberry prunt

Between 10 and 30 of these would have been set onto the stem of a 17th-century wine glass or *roemer*, perhaps to stop it slipping out of greasy hands before forks were widely adopted. They were beautiful ornaments and its dimples are tactile beyond belief.



## Kind hearts and coronets

The export of a sapphire-and-diamond coronet of medieval form made for Queen Victoria in 1842 has been temporarily stopped, in the hope that it can be bought for the nation. Diana Scarisbrick sets this treasure in the context of the romantic enthusiasm for re-creating the past that the Queen shared with Prince Albert

ONE of the many attractions of antique jewellery is its power to evoke the lives and personalities of the original owners. This is particularly true of the sapphire-and-diamond coronet created for Queen Victoria by the jeweller Joseph Kitching in 1842 (*Fig 1*). The granting of an export licence for this treasure has been delayed, to allow time for a British collection to raise £5million to purchase it.

Surmounted by trefoil-shaped royal fleurons, the coronet is not only a statement of sovereignty, but also an expression of the Queen's sense of history, an interest she shared with Prince Albert. Of Plantagenet inspiration in design, it was intended to encircle a chignon at the back of the head, in a manner similar to a pearl coronet worn by Queen Henrietta Maria in a portrait by Hendrik van Steenwyck of about 1630 (*Fig 2*).

As a favourite jewel, it appears in F. X. Winterhalter's first portrait of Queen Victoria, painted in 1842 (*Fig 3*), and again in a miniature by Robert Thornton, which was copied in Berlin porcelain for her Jewel Cabinet (*Fig 4*), made in 1851, where it is partnered with a fine miniature of Albert. Epitomising

the spirit of English Romanticism, she wears a medievalising gown with slashed sleeves and he is dressed in armour, like a knight in a tournament.

During the youth of the royal couple, this new artistic language emerged to influence costume, coiffures and jewellery. Although there is no direct evidence that the coronet was designed by Prince Albert, it embodies the tastes he shared with the Queen. Romanticism brought a veneration for history and, through its master novelist, Sir Walter Scott—the Queen's '*beau idéal* of a poet'—the lives and characters of past times caught the imagination of the young Victoria.

This led her to mark her Coronation in 1837 with souvenirs of historical significance. Thus, when the ancient crown of the Hanoverian kings was dismantled and the stones used for her new, light crown, she ordered that the diamonds left over should be set into eight rings, which she then presented, duly inscribed, to each of her train-bearers (*Fig 5*).

Early in her reign, she wore an archetypal historicist jewel, the *ferronière*, copied from the bandeau on the forehead of the sitter

*Fig 1 above: A coronet of sapphires and diamonds, made for Queen Victoria in 1842 by the jeweller Joseph Kitching*

in Leonardo da Vinci's famous portrait *La belle ferronière* (the wife or daughter of a blacksmith or *ferronier*). For his part, the very well-educated Prince Albert arrived in England steeped in the atmosphere of German Romanticism and was an enthusiast for the works of Goethe and Schiller and the paintings of Friedrich Overbeck.

After their marriage, one of Albert's first tasks was to rescue the Royal Collection of miniatures from neglect and to encourage the Queen to study, classify and add to it, so as to assemble a comprehensive miniature gallery of portraits of the Tudor, Stuart and Hanoverian kings, queens and eminent personalities of England, with their Continental counterparts. Together, the young couple spent many happy hours looking at these treasures and, after dinner at Windsor Castle, invited guests to examine and talk about them.

Gripped by this enthusiasm for the past, they held three great costume balls

at Buckingham Palace. For the first, in 1842, they returned to the Middle Ages: the Prince dressed up as the Plantagenet King Edward III and Queen Victoria as his wife, Queen Philippa (**Fig 9**). Their example was followed by the other guests, who also wore 14th-century-style dress and jewellery. Eight noblemen came as knights in armour, in homage to the spirit of chivalry in England.

The next ball, in 1845, re-created the Court of George II, with the Queen resplendent in 18th-century dress, powdered hair and diamond jewellery: as the guests arrived, they let down their carriage windows to show off their gorgeous costumes to the admiring crowds outside the palace. For the third, on the theme of the Court of Louis XIV at Versailles, held at the same time as the Great Exhibition of 1851, even more magnificent jewels were worn with silks and satins trimmed with gold and silver lace.

As most jewels from the past had vanished, models for revivals were taken from portraits shown in museums, picture galleries and exhibitions or from books with illustrations of old jewellery and dress.



However, at the sale of Horace Walpole's collection at Strawberry Hill in 1842, the Queen seized the chance to acquire an evocative authentic memorial of the House of Stuart, the Darnley Jewel (**Fig 6**). In a complex series of emblems and mottoes, this heart-shaped jewel relates the biography of Margaret Douglas, Countess of Lennox, granddaughter of Henry VII, and was created in memory of her husband, Matthew Stewart, Regent of Scotland, who died in 1571.

➤

**Fig 2 above left:** Queen Henrietta Maria wears a pearl coronet in this portrait by van Steenwyck, which influenced Victoria's. **Fig 3 above right:** Queen Victoria wearing the coronet in a detail of a portrait by F. X. Winterhalter. It was designed to be worn around a chignon on the back of the head. **Fig 4 below:** The Queen's Jewel Cabinet, designed by Ludwig Gruner and made in 1851. The Queen and Prince Albert are in medieval dress; Victoria is wearing the sapphire-and-diamond coronet





**Fig 5 above:** Queen Victoria's appreciation of historic jewels is embodied in the rings she commissioned for the train-bearers at her Coronation, set with diamonds taken from the ancient crown of the Hanoverian kings. **Fig 6 right:** The celebrated 16th-century Darnley Jewel, which she bought at the Strawberry Hill sale in 1842

S.J. Phillips Ltd, Royal Collection Trust/HM Queen Elizabeth II/Bridgeman Images; National Army Museum, London/Bridgeman Images

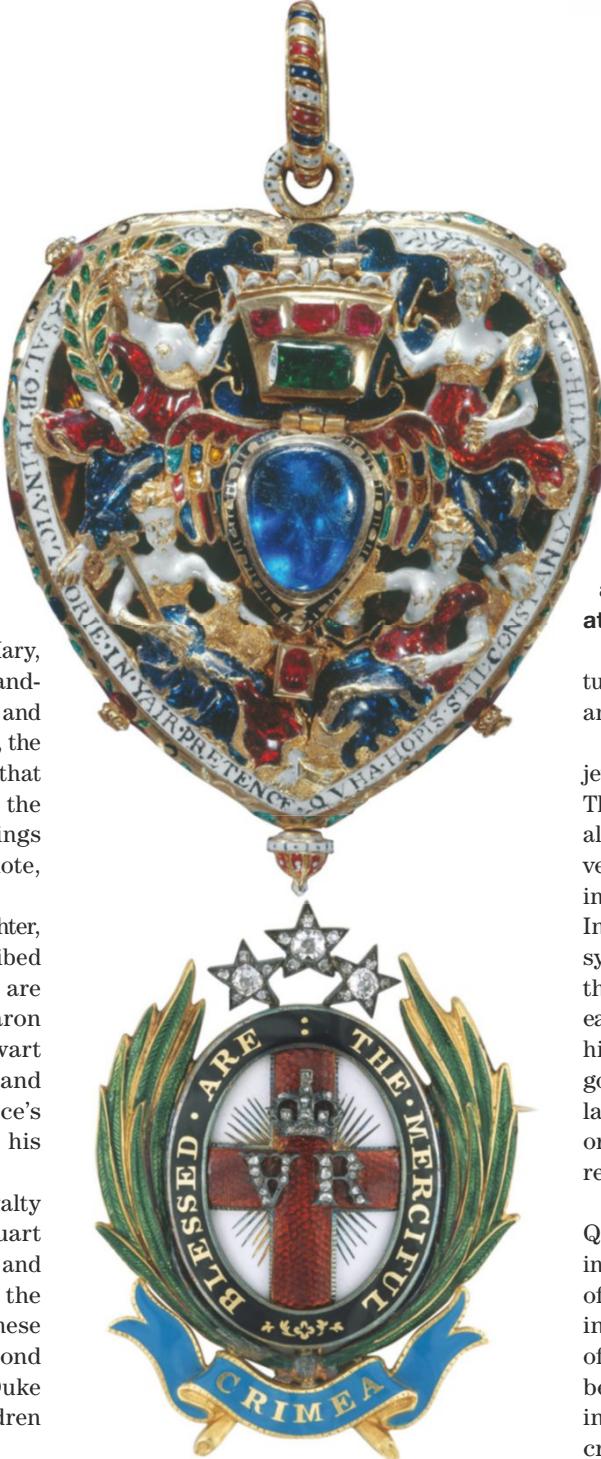
As their son, Lord Darnley, married Mary, Queen of Scots, they were the grandparents of the future James I of England and it was through his daughter, Elizabeth, the Princess Royal, grandmother of George I, that Queen Victoria claimed descent from the Stuarts. She therefore regarded the kings and queens of Scotland, however remote, as her ancestors.

In a letter of 1888 to her eldest daughter, Vicky, the Empress of Germany, she described a visit to Renfrew and Paisley, 'which are the cradle of our family as the Baron of Renfrew took the name of Stewart from being made Royal Steward and married Margery, Robert the Bruce's daughter. King Robert the Third and his wife are buried in Paisley Cathedral.'

No longer a political threat, the loyalty of the Jacobites to the House of Stuart appealed to the Queen's romantic spirit and she came to believe that she was the embodiment of the two nations. With these feelings, she made Scotland her second home, gave her son Alfred the title of Duke of Edinburgh and dressed all her children in the Royal Stuart tartan.

With her own plaid, she wore jewels with a Scottish theme: Celtic-style brooches set with pieces of granite from the Balmoral estate, acorn-shaped earrings, a necklace set with the teeth of a stag shot by Prince Albert and a bracelet he designed for their wedding anniversary in 1845 with the band enamelled in imitation of a turquoise plaid, centred on a large pearl thistle.

Throughout their life together, Albert involved himself in the formation of her collection of jewellery and the designs of those intended for presentation. He began with a brooch modelled on his family badge, the Coburg eagle, paved with turquoise and gripping pearls in its claws. Given



**Fig 8:** The gold-and-enamel Crimea brooch, made by Garrard to a design probably by Prince Albert and presented by Queen Victoria to Florence Nightingale in 1855

to the 12 bridesmaids at their wedding, these set a fashion for heraldic jewels adopted by other well-born bridegrooms (**Fig 7**).

The Prince's wedding gift to the Queen was a brooch set with a large sapphire framed within 12 very white diamonds, a jewel that she reserved for grand occasions. Other, more light-hearted, gifts followed: a necklace of enamelled and emerald flowers, a set of



**Fig 7:** One of 12 turquoise-and-pearl brooches depicting the Coburg eagle, designed by Prince Albert as gifts for the bridesmaids at his wedding in 1840

turquoises, a ruby-and-diamond demi-parure and a bracelet with a spider stalking a fly.

Sentiment was a major theme of the jewels designed by the Prince for his wife. These were intended as surprises and she was always pleased with those marking the anniversary of their marriage, recording them in a sketchbook now in the Royal Library. In 1846, she was especially touched by the symbolism of 'a wreath going right round the head made to match the brooch and earrings he gave me at Christmas. It is entirely his own design. The leaves are of frosted gold, the orange blossoms of white porcelain and the four little green enamel oranges meant to represent our four children—such a dear kind thought of Albert's'.

At a time when so many died young, the Queen was often obliged to wear jewels in memory of close relations. After the death of her aunt Queen Louise of the Belgians in 1850, the Prince gave her 'a present of infinite value to me, a miniature of my beloved Louise in a clasp to a bracelet in dull deepish blue enamel with a black cross, the cipher in diamonds—all dear Albert's own design and very lovely—I did a sketch of it.'

A devoted father, Albert used his talents not only for the Queen, but also for their daughters. On her wedding in 1858, Princess Victoria received an emerald-and-diamond pendant with matching bracelet and an opal-and-diamond parure and, before his death in 1861, Albert had planned the jewels for Princess Alice, who married Grand Duke Louis of Hesse the following year.

Whether expensive or not, all jewels given on anniversaries, at Christmas or as souvenirs for bridesmaids and guests at weddings were discussed by the



**Fig 9:** Landseer's portrait of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, dressed as Edward III and Queen Philippa for a costume ball at Buckingham Palace in 1842. The couple's enthusiasm for history is reflected in the Queen's jewels

couple together. This fruitful collaboration also extended to jewels of national interest, exemplified by a brooch given by the Queen to Florence Nightingale in 1855, in gratitude for her 'devotion to the Queen's brave soldiers' in the Crimea (*Fig 8*).

Most importantly, with Prince Albert's encouragement, the leading jewellers participated in the international exhibitions held in London in 1851 and 1862.

Proud of her husband's involvement, the Queen was pleased to see 'our beautiful jewel case' at the Great Exhibition of 1851, where it was shown by the Birmingham silversmith Elkington.

Significantly, in 1866, to help her through the ordeal of the first State Opening of Parliament in her widowhood, the Queen chose to appear with the sapphire-and-diamond coronet on her head, above

a 'Mary Stuart' cap and veil. It remained in the Royal Collection until 1922, when George V gave it to his daughter, the Princess Royal, on her marriage to Viscount Lascelles, later Lord Harewood. It was recently sold by their grandson.

As an embodiment of Prince Albert and Queen Victoria's mutual devotion and shared passion for history, it deserves to be acquired for the nation.



**E**CHOING Harold Macmillan's alleged reply of 'events, dear boy, events' when asked what factors were most likely to blow his government off course, the recent slowdown in the prime central London property market can be squarely attributed to a series of politically driven initiatives. These include the threat of a mansion tax back in 2014, followed by the independence referendum in Scotland, two significant hikes in Stamp Duty Land Tax (SDLT), the General Election in 2015 and, most recently, Brexit.

‘The government relies on London for this revenue’

All of these factors no doubt helped to intensify the feeling of unease that has permeated the top end of the London residential property market in the past two years, but, as far as leading estate agents are concerned, the real villains of the piece have been those punitive SDLT increases imposed by George Osborne—first of all in December 2014, then again in April this year, when an additional 3% was levied on buy-to-let properties and sales of second homes.

As a result, Savills say, sales of properties valued at more than £10 million have fallen by 10.4% since September 2014; by 8.1% for those in the £5m to £10m price bracket; 3.4% for those priced between £2m and £3m; and a marginal 0.3% for properties priced between £1m and £2m. On the other hand, properties priced between £500,000 and £1m—the sector most favoured by the new SDLT regime—showed an increase in sales of 3.7%.

Knight Frank's latest London Residential Review highlights the importance of the prime London housing market as a vital building block for a stronger UK economy, particularly

## London's winners and losers

Political and financial uncertainty may be good or bad news for London property, depending on the postcode

Decline of prime central London sales volumes 2009–16

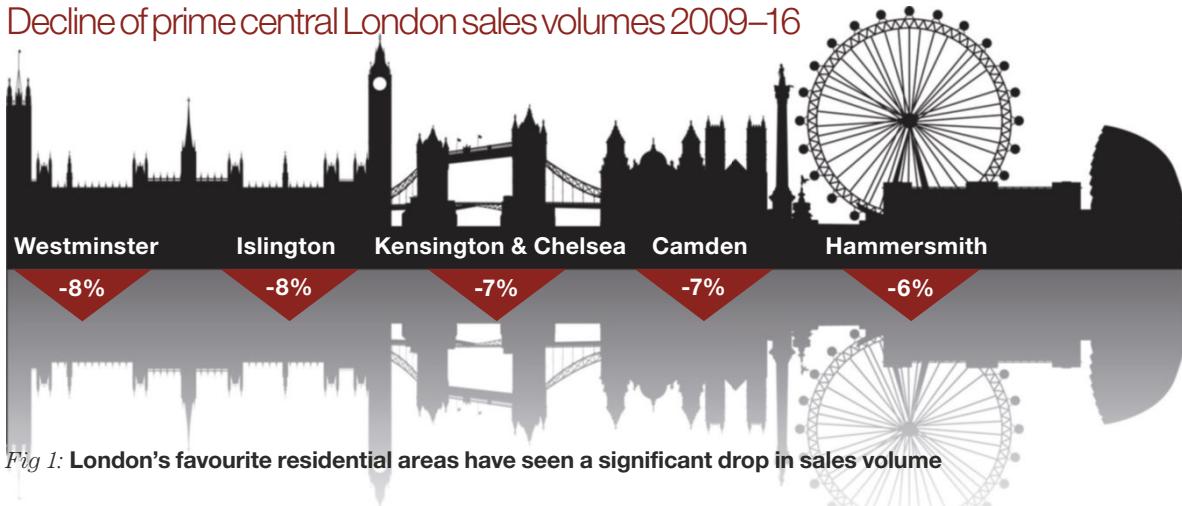


Fig 1: London's favourite residential areas have seen a significant drop in sales volume



Fig 2 above and  
Fig 3 left:

**Netherton Lodge offers five bedrooms and a garden in a quiet cul-de-sac in Chelsea, SW10. £7.25m**



in view of the economic and political uncertainty caused by Britain's vote to leave the European Union. The report underlines the fact that 11% of all SDLT revenue in England and Wales is collected in the two London boroughs of Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster and maintains that the Government increasingly relies on London for this revenue, an overall figure that now exceeds £6 billion a year.

Crucially, it makes the point that although 'London's SDLT contribution rose to 44.6% in the year to March 2016—from 41.5% a year earlier—London only accounted for 12.3% of transactions, down from 12.7% the previous year. The picture emerging is one of growing fiscal reliance on areas where transactions are shrinking at the steepest rate'.

The volume of transactions in the key areas of Westminster, Camden, Islington, Kensington & Chelsea and Hammersmith & Fulham all fell by an average of more than 5% per year over the five-year period to March 2016 (**Fig 1**)—the first time a decline of this magnitude has been registered in this many London boroughs since Land Registry records began, in 1995. Having made it a priority to tackle Britain's 'housing deficit', can Prime Minister Theresa May really afford to kill off London's golden geese?

But it's not all doom and gloom in London's golden postcodes, insists Charlie Willis, who heads up Strutt & Parker's London residential team.



'The main stumbling block at the moment is the high cost of moving,' Mr Willis explains. 'No matter how wealthy they are, people hate wasting money and many homeowners who need more space are currently investing in their existing property, rather than gifting hundreds of thousands of pounds to the Treasury, for which they get nothing in return. In fact, it's rumoured that the owners of at least 10 houses in Claborne Mews, SW1—one of Knightsbridge's smartest addresses—have applied for planning consent for basement extensions.'

He continues: 'After a year and a half of strong headwinds in the prime central London market, there's a lot of good property to choose from and, with plenty of fresh stock coming this autumn, buyers who have been searching for some time will be able to compare new and old in what is now a buyer's market. It could be a great time to make offers on the older stock and get a good deal, but be sure to do your homework on the vendor first. Not everyone needs to sell this side of Christmas, but others might be keen to negotiate on price in order to move quickly.'

Mr Willis expects overseas investors and British expats, for whom the devaluation of sterling represents an automatic discount on the price of a London home, to be the main drivers of the market this autumn. That view is amply supported by the recent announcement from the Malaysia-backed Battersea Power Station Development Company that Apple has signed up for 500,000sq ft of office space in the new complex, where 85% of the first tranche of new homes—at prices ranging from £338,000 to £10m—has already sold.

New developments have also proved to be winners in Mayfair, the only area in the boroughs of Westminster and Kensington & Chelsea that hasn't experienced negative annual growth since the financial crisis, points out Jonathan Hough of Knight Frank's Mayfair office. In the year to April 2016, 76% of all properties sold in Mayfair were priced at less than £5m, says Mr Hough, who reveals that a typical £5m property in the area is a three-bedroom flat on a prime

*Fig 4 left: This house on Argyll Road in Kensington, W8, on the Phillimore Estate spans five floors. £8.5m*



street such as South Audley Street. Mayfair also boasts the highest value per square foot (£2,422) of all the key boroughs, compared with £2,161 in Belgravia; £1,594 in Marylebone; £1,524 in Kensington; and £1,383 in Chelsea.

Since 2012, price growth in Kensington has been weaker than markets north of Hyde Park, including W2 and Marylebone, where demand intensified as these formerly underrated areas began to offer better value.

**‘It could be a great time to make offers on the older stock’**

However, Kensington has started to look relatively good value again, says Mark Redfern of Knight Frank's Kensington office (020-7361 0183), who points to a handsome, six-bedroom family house for sale in Argyll Road (**Fig 4**) on the Phillimore Estate, W8, at a guide price of £8.5m, compared with the prices achieved for the last four houses sold on the same road, the most recent of which made £9.1m.

Jonathan Hewlett of Savills reports a good year to date for sales in Fulham, an area popular with European families, which he reckoned had become 'somewhat over-heated' in recent years. He recommends the pretty 30, Cloncurry Street, Fulham SW6 (**Fig 5**), a seven-bedroom family house with a full basement on one of the most sought-after streets on the leafy Bishops Park Estate close to the river, at a guide price of £4.3m (020-7409 8823).

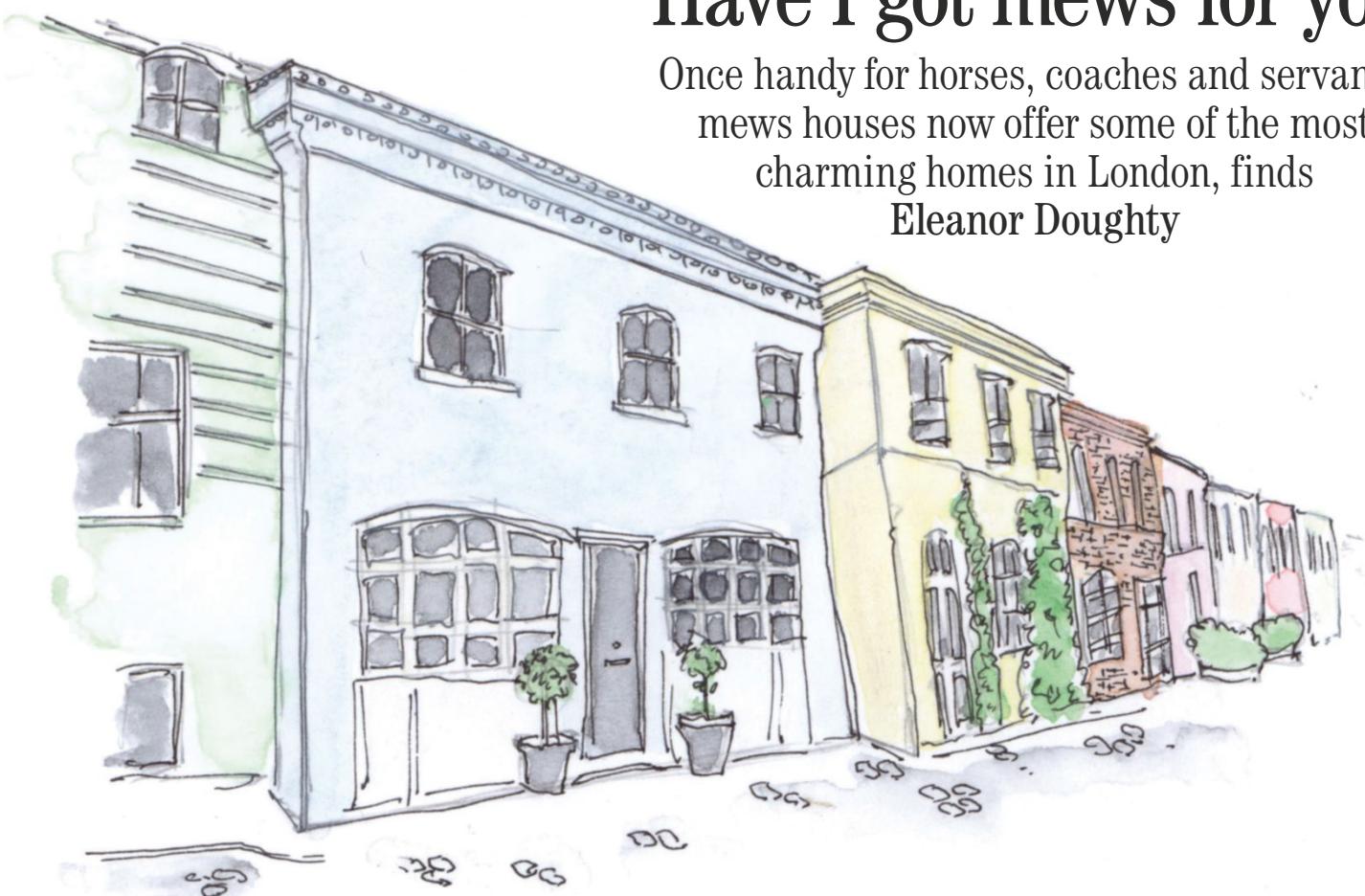
And what trendy family, European or British, wouldn't choose to live in busy, buzzy Chelsea, where Savills (020-7730 0822) quote a guide price of £7.25m for impressive Netherton Lodge in Netherton Grove, SW10 (**Fig 2 and Fig 3**), a quiet cul-de-sac just off the most fashionable section of the Fulham Road. This delightful five-bedroom house has off-street parking, a glorious garden, loads of natural light and 3,185sq ft of living space, all above ground.

*Fig 5: No 30, Cloncurry Street in Fulham, SW6, boasts a basement and a 35ft garden. £4.3m*



## Have I got mews for you

Once handy for horses, coaches and servants, mews houses now offer some of the most charming homes in London, finds Eleanor Doughty



**T**AKE a turn off one of London's smartest streets and you might find yourself staring down a cobbled drive edged with cars, an occasional picnic table stacked at the side and loops of hydrangeas wound around a great stone arch. The centre of London has more than 300 mews, often well hidden and each with its own character and village atmosphere.

However, the mews was not always such a rarefied species. First built in the 17th and 18th centuries around the back of grand terraced houses, they were quiet spots for storing horses, coaches and servants. The name 'mews' derives from the Royal Mews, the stables on the spot we now call Trafalgar Square. This in turn dates from the original use of the building—not for keeping horses, but the king's falcons, during the moult process; 'mews' is from the French *muer*, 'to change'.

By the beginning of the 20th century, the invention of the motorcar and a servant shortage caused by the First World War reduced the need for a mews. The Swinging Sixties saved London's best, when a handful of racing-car drivers identified these unassuming

**Combining the ease of inner-city living with the community feel of the countryside, mews houses have become extremely popular in recent years**

streets as the perfect spots for keeping their cars safe.

One was rally driver Antoine Lurot, founder of specialist mews estate agent Lurot Brand (020-7479 1999; [www.lurotbrand.co.uk](http://www.lurotbrand.co.uk)). Lurot's mews directory comprises 344 London streets—not all of which have mews in the name. Adam's Row in Mayfair, between Berkeley Square and Grosvenor Square, is a street of large gabled coach houses; Campden House Close, a cul-de-sac with a spacious

courtyard, off Hornton Street in Kensington, is tucked between Holland Park and Kensington Gardens. Others are in quieter village areas, such as Fairfax Place in South Hampstead or Eton Garages in Belsize Park.

In defining a mews, 'pedants say that the house has got to have had a horse living in it,' notes Duncan Petrie, head of mews sales at Savills (020-3430 6605; [www.savills.co.uk](http://www.savills.co.uk)). In Belgravia and Knightsbridge, history is coming full



**Notting Hill, £2.1 million**  
Jackson-Stops & Staff (020-7727 5111)  
An unusual ladder leads to a private roof terrace in this two-bedroom house on quiet Prince's Mews



### South Kensington, £3.85 million

Lurot Brand (020-7590 9955)

With bespoke joinery, imported stone and state-of-the-art technology throughout, this three-bedroom house on Reece Mews has a garage, a balcony and a light-filled central stairwell



### Mayfair, £27.5 million

Knight Frank (020-7647 6608)

Elegant but large, this property on Balfour Mews has eight bedrooms, a west-facing courtyard garden and an adjoining mews house with garaged parking for two cars

circle. ‘Some of the mews houses are being reattached to the main houses. Margaret Thatcher’s house in Chester Square has got a mews property behind it,’ he adds.

For most mews residents, however, their two- or three-bedroom properties don’t come with a town house in tow. Nevertheless, they know that they’re part of an exclusive club. Simona Tappi lives with her husband and two children in Craven Hill Mews, near Paddington. ‘It’s incredibly welcoming, safe and quiet. There’s no traffic and we’re very hidden away,’ she discloses. Her mews, a cobbled cul-de-sac, is approached through an entrance under a building on Devonshire Terrace and has 26 residential properties on it.

Residents aver that the difference between living in a mews and just about anywhere else in central London is the sense of neighbourhood. ‘This summer, our friends, who have lived in a mews for about 20 years, organised a little street party. We all took some food and had bunting up,’ adds Mrs Tappi. ‘We’re a five-minute walk from Hyde Park and it’s rare to find somewhere in that location with such a homely feel to it.’

Lurot Brand’s James Robinson has identified a group of Londoners he calls ‘mewsophiles’. ‘People collect them,’ he laughs. ‘Families that move to the country from London because they’ve got kids and want horses inevitably want to keep something in town. You can just lock up and leave a mews house.’

Despite considerable uptake by developers, basement building is *infra dig* in the mews community. John Rushton has lived in Bathurst Mews, near Paddington, for 40 years and there are currently eight basements being dug on this 80-house mews. They’re unpopular, ‘not least because of the huge trucks delivering building materials all the time and ripping BT wires off the walls’.

Mr Rushton believes the street is ‘more international now, with younger couples—those who aspire to senior management in the City. As soon as they have children, they disappear. When I first moved here, the residents were British and people had proper jobs’.

The one thing that hasn’t changed on Bathurst Mews is its equine



### Marylebone,

£3.5 million

Savills (020-3527 0400)

This two-bed-room property on Woodstock Mews is a few steps from the boutiques and restaurants of Marylebone Village and has 922 years remaining on the lease

population. It’s the last London mews with horses—Ross Nye Stables is located at No 8 and Hyde Park Stables at 63.

Mr Robinson singles out Pont Street Mews, a stone’s throw from Harrods, and Kynance Mews—it’s just achingly pretty—as being arguably the smartest. He adds: ‘Every five minutes, someone stops and takes a photograph of Ladbroke Walk in Holland Park.’

The most valuable asset that all share is peace—birds, rather than traffic, will wake you. ‘The big houses bat the noise away, so the mews are silent,’ Mr Robinson explains. ‘You could be in a village, yet you walk around the corner and you’re in the middle of town. Mews are the few places in London where it’s impossible not to say hello to the person walking the other way. I say, if you want a slice of the country, get a mews house! ’

### Something to mews on

- Most mews houses had a tunnel under the garden that connected with the basement of the house they serviced, so that servants could slip in and out without being noticed
- The majority were originally built without windows at the back, to avoid the peeking eyes of servants
- There are more mews in the City of Westminster (195) than any other London borough
- London’s longest mews is Pavilion Road, Chelsea, at just over 900 yards
- Bruce Reynolds is said to have planned the Great Train Robbery in a pub in Belgrave Mews West, Knightsbridge



# Born in the USA

With TEFAF at the helm, this year's autumn fair at New York's Armory is larger and offers more treasures than ever

**T**HERE were fewer American collectors at the TEFAF Maastricht Fair than usual this year and, although there was American buying at LAPADA, I suspect that the same may be true of the early-autumn fairs in London and Paris. European dealers heading for New York to exhibit at the new TEFAF-organised event at the Park Avenue Armory from October 22 to 26 are trusting that 'not travelling' will not equate to 'not buying'.

As I have mentioned before, recessions and times of political turbulence are generally good for the traditional art and antiques trade and the USA is likely to be in a febrile condition even after November 8, so a certain degree of confidence is justified. In February, after 28 years, Anna and Brian Haughton, organisers of the autumn International Fairs at the Armory, transferred ownership to TEFAF, so this event is both a continuation and a new beginning.

With 94 exhibitors, it will be larger than for some time and many are Maastricht veterans, not all of whom have previously shown in New York. Others are returning after a time away.

*Fig 1: Oval silver tureen (1799). With Koopman*



About two-thirds are European, including at least 25 from London.

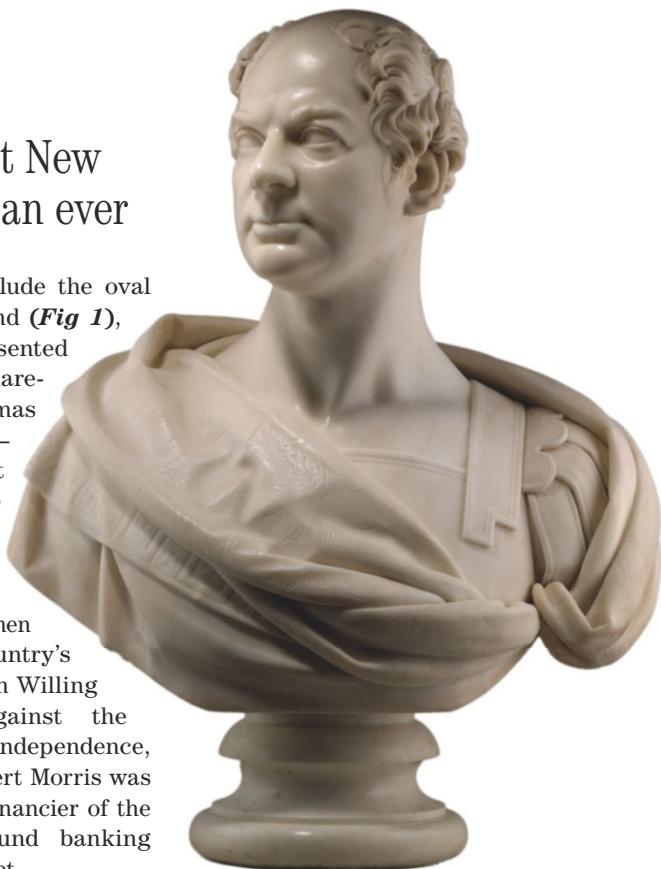
Like its predecessor, but not Maastricht, which includes a sometimes variable contemporary element, this fair will range from antiquity to the early 20th century and a second new event organised by TEFAF and its partner Artvest, a New York investment advisory service, will be launched next May to offer Modern and contemporary art.

Koopman, the Chancery Lane silver dealer, is always able to find pieces that tickle the palates of particular audiences and, here, it does so with a tureen by Paul Storr (1771–1844), who is one of the company's specialities. A group of pieces

by him will include the oval tureen on a stand (*Fig 1*), which was presented in 1799 by shareholders to Thomas Willing (1731–1821), the first president of the First National Bank of the United States in Philadelphia, then the infant country's capital. Although Willing had voted against the Declaration of Independence, his partner Robert Morris was known as the 'financier of the Revolution'. Sound banking practice, no doubt.

An item shown by the arms and armour specialist Peter Finer also has a tangential connection to Philadelphia. A buffe is a protector for the throat and lower face that fits between a helmet and cuirass. This one (*Fig 2*) was made in about 1586 as part of an armour garniture for the Elector Christian I of Saxony by the last of the great Augsburg armourers, Anton Peffenhauser (1525–1603). Most other elements of the garniture, including the helmet, are still in the Dresden Armoury (or, delightfully, in German, *Rüstkammer*) but one piece, a vamplate—the round plate that protects the hand holding a lance—is now in the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

A marble bust of Lt-Gen Sir Herbert Taylor (1775–1839) (*Fig 3*), which will be with Tomasso Brothers, shows him, discreetly, in Roman armour, but he must have been as accomplished a diplomat as a soldier. He was aide-de-camp to the Duke of York, private secretary to George III and Queen Charlotte, military secretary to the Duke of Wellington, adjutant-general of the forces and private



*Fig 3: Bust of Lt-Gen Sir Herbert Taylor. With Tomasso Brothers*

secretary to William IV and aide-de-camp to the young Victoria. Despite the notorious difficulties of George IV with the rest of the family, Taylor also remained on good terms with him.

The bust is by Samuel Joseph (1791–1850) and the choice of proud Roman attire was not only professionally appropriate and fashionable, but personally, too, as, on retirement, it was in Rome that he died.

The current 12th Earl of Shaftesbury could be excused a touch of immodesty about his achievement in bringing back from near death St Giles House, the family seat in Dorset. Virtually abandoned in 1954, it was on the register of Buildings at Risk in 2001, but, 10 years after the Earl's accession in 2005, it won the Historic Houses Association and Sotheby's Restoration Award. Alas, over the decades of abandonment, much of the best furniture was sold off and, at today's prices, there could be little chance of getting much of it back.



In New York, Ronald Phillips will be showing a pair of Chinese lacquer commodes (**Fig 4**) supplied to the 4th Earl for the house, almost certainly by John Cobb, in about 1765. Cobb, with his partner William Vile until that year, worked almost next door to Chippendale in St Martin's Lane. He was said to be 'perhaps, the haughtiest man

in England', which, on one occasion, earned him an admirable lesson in courtesy from George III. The commodes are old friends of COUNTRY LIFE, first featuring here in 1915.

There is much happy argument to be had about the origins of the game of croquet and its descent from various medieval and 17th-century games.

**Fig 4:** A pair of Chinese lacquer commodes made in about 1765 (detail, left). They first featured in COUNTRY LIFE in 1915. With Ronald Phillips

However, it is generally accepted that the modern game was first played in Ireland and brought to England in the 1850s, there to be promoted by Jaques of London. For about 20 years, it enjoyed great popularity, partly because it could be played by both sexes, but then it was usurped by the new lawn tennis. However, there was a revival during the 1890s. Some of the earliest paintings are French, including an 1873 canvas by Manet, which shows a game on a challengingly rough field.

Among a selection of works by Renoir that Richard Green

is taking to New York is an 18½in by 21⅞in canvas, *Enfants dans le jardin de Montmartre: la partie de croquet*, painted in about 1895 (**Fig 5**). It is a truly Impressionist sketch, full of light and movement. There is much gossip, as there should be, thoroughly ignored by the boy taking his shot at the centre. Could this be the artist's son, Jean Renoir, who wrote that Montmartre was then 'a little paradise of lilacs and roses, whose inhabitants dwelt in a world apart'? ↗

**Next week PAD report with Olympia to come**



### Pick of the week

For his latest exhibition at Sladmore Contemporary in Bruton Place, off Berkeley Square London W1, Nick Bibby mixes the realistic sculptures of animals for which he is best known with equally realistic mythological creatures to produce 'A Bestiary of the Real and Imagined', which runs to October 28. Among the creatures is a writhing Midgard Serpent, the arch-enemy of the god Thor.



**Fig 5:** An Impressionist canvas by Renoir (1895). With Richard Green

## Digging a little deeper

Giles Waterfield is intrigued by a new study of London's buried history, inspired by the excavations carried out for the Crossrail link

### History/archaeology

#### The Tunnel Through Time

Gillian Tindall

(Chatto & Windus, £20)

**T**HIS book is a picaresque exploration and personal history of certain quarters of London that have been dug up during the creation of the new Crossrail link. The Elizabeth line, as it will be named, is being built from the East End (and beyond) to Slough, Maidenhead and as far as Reading. Its new stations, many of them in central London, are 'giving archaeologists extraordinary and probably unrepeatable opportunities for careful examination of what lies there'. These opportunities have been taken up by Museum of London Archaeology.

Much of *A Tunnel Through Time* is about the changing (and sometimes long-lasting) nature of roads. An equally prominent theme is the graves and corpses that have been excavated—the author returns often to styles of burial and once-common ideas, such as the belief that overfilled burial grounds produced a deadly miasma that could endanger the living.

Much of the story relates to the horrors of slums and the way in which neighbourhoods, often within a generation or two, were newly created, flourished and then steadily declined. Especially poignant is the account of the area of St Giles High Street: once a notorious slum, it survives only in fragments around its church, having been largely obliterated by Victorian improvements, then by Centre Point in the 1960s and more recent developments.

Gillian Tindall is intrigued by past inhabitants. Her account of young John Pocock, who, in the early 19th century, lived with his family in Kilburn and regularly walked 15 or even 30 miles a day on errands or for pleasure, keeping



a diary of his adventures before he left for Australia at the age of 15, is the first of a number of such character sketches. They include Sir John Oldcastle, possibly the inspiration for Shakespeare's Falstaff, the elegant Elizabethan courtier John Harington, the virtuous and long-lived Duchess Dudley and many more.

The scholarship is worn lightly and entertainingly, with a strong sense of period and of the people who once occupied these places with as much intensity as we do today, though their fears and fascinations—of the Underground railway, for example—may have been different to ours.

The book is naturally a history of change and demolition. Miss Tindall is philosophical about

the extent of loss, though always gratified when she finds an interesting survival of the past. What comes over most strongly is the individuality of many parts of London, areas whose character is now being widely obliterated because the city authorities consider that building upwards, at any cost, is a fine thing to do.

She is scathing about the damage caused by post-war rebuilding and one catches a tremor in her voice when she records the reshaping of such hardy survivals as Denmark Place in Soho. This is tempered by nostalgia: 'I should so very much like to be crossing Bishopsgate or St Giles High Street at some unaccustomed hour... and suddenly catch sight, however fleetingly, of a fine, timbered house, and hear a clop of hooves towards it,' she writes.

The book refers frequently to historic maps. Although the publishers have provided a few examples, comparing areas in, say, 1550 with the present, supplemented by a sprinkling of photographs and engravings, I would have loved to see a more richly illustrated publication. Still, the power of the word is strong and any enthusiast for history or for London will enjoy browsing through this highly personal, but never whimsical account of the capital.

**Treasures of the East End: St Dunstan's Church, seen here in the late 19th century, is of ancient origin, but has been rebuilt a number of times**



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# Books

## Cultural history

### London in Fragments

Ted Sandling

(Frances Lincoln, £16.99)

I FOUND a distinct frisson running through me as I read this book. Its subject is mudlarking by the Thames (see page 94). A mudlark is someone who searches the shores of the river for the unconsidered trifles that wash up there, edges worn smooth by the washing of many tides; every day yields a different haul, as the treasures displayed to view at one low water are snatched away, returned to the ooze and replaced by another sample.

The activity is free to anyone, although many readers, I suspect, will be happy that Ted Sandling has done it for them, recording the finds made since he began 10 years ago—calling cards left in the 21st century by the long dead.

These aren't precious items, but that's the point. Often broken,

they belonged to ordinary Londoners and were simply part of their everyday lives. But what an insight into the variousness of those lives they provide.

Some items—a scrap of 16th-century Italian maiolica, the top of a broken Tudor money box (Tudor money boxes were meant to be broken, when they'd served their need)—are quite old. Others are of more recent date, but peculiar to the uninformed eye—the 'saggars' that potters used to support the pieces in the kiln, for example, or the eerie, unjointed bisque doll known as a Frozen Charlotte (fun for a little girl to play with, possibly, but looking, now, more like a votive figure).

The majority, perhaps, may be obvious enough, but how evocative they are: clay pipes, buttons, perfume-bottle stoppers and pickle jars that got lost or discarded over time, their owners never expecting them to be found again or to have a new life in print.

*Ted Sandling 2016: Jan Baldwin*

## Interior decoration

### English Houses: Inspirational Interiors from City Apartments to Country

#### Manor Houses

Ben Pentreath

(Ryland Peters & Small, £30)

IN HIS chummily romantic blog—extolling his fondness for Wedgwood coronation mugs, Batsford book jackets, *ikat* lampshades, Staffordshire dogs

and leggy-stemmed pelargoniums—architectural and interior designer Ben Pentreath has joyfully reaffirmed the charm of English decorating. Once upon a time, shabby chic was a necessary compromise.

Today, it has all but vanished and houses in the country, belonging to forty-somethings and younger, glisten with the slick, homogenous chic of boutique hotels, all glamorous bathrooms and quirky wallpapers.

Mr Pentreath's touch is gentler. The interiors he creates—and those he admires—include their measure of dog-eared corners and frayed edges; of mismatches that, however artfully considered, contrive to appear inevitable; of rooms of books and flowers; and, above all, a sense of their owners.

This, his second book on interior design, celebrates rooms stamped with sensibility and personality. Like others before him, including Nicholas Haslam, he understands that decoration ought to solace, uplift and, if possible, flatter rooms' occupants.



Each has been indefatigably researched, to reveal, for instance, that a piece of NYK Line tableware (made in Burslem, Staffordshire, in about 1900) belonged to the first Asian company to ship from London to the East; both Mitsubishi and Tata & Sons—still familiar names—were involved.

The surviving words on a tiny, 19th-century type block found at Vauxhall read like poetry: 'GOLD Handsome... graved, and... Pearls and fine... lustrous Gems.' They could stand as a motto to the book. To the mudlark, every Waldorf Hotel teacup or lead-glazed pipkin handle is a jewel. *Clive Aslet*

**One man's trash: the author's finds include this piece of green transfer-ware, which is probably 19th century**



*English Houses* is divided into three sections—London flats and houses, houses in the country and larger country houses—and includes the author's London flat and his old parsonage in West Dorset. All pack a powerful visual punch, although not all will appeal to every reader.

Mr Pentreath describes them as demonstrating 'an approach to decoration that is unhurried and personal, which is a true defining characteristic of the finest English interiors', although several schemes are recent and some, including his own interiors, are continually evolving works in progress.

What these rooms largely avoid is predictability. Here is a kitchen floor painted milkshake pink, a Syrian inlaid side table, framed pressed ferns and old maps, furniture loose-covered in a medley of unexpected patterns, even a corgi in his basket in a drawing room. This is a lovely, colourful, inspiring book to be savoured.

*Matthew Dennison*

## History/topography

### The Shipping Forecast:

#### A Miscellany

Nic Compton

(BBC Books, £9.99)

THE SHIPPING FORECAST—that nightly clockwise recitation of the sea areas around the British Isles (plus coastal stations/inshore waters)—is as embedded in the national psyche as the chimes of Big Ben. Both have been broadcast since the early days of radio, in 1924.

Now, Nic Compton has written its history: a neat book, which could be easily slipped into a Christmas stocking and is nicely designed as a series of separate yarns and instructive figures.

Mr Compton is better equipped than most of us, who depend on the *Forecast* (broadcast daily at 12.48am and 5.20am) for reassurance as we lie snug

abed. 'I am stormbound in northern Spain on an old wooden sloop,' is his opening sentence and the dedicatee, his father, is a former Royal Navy Lieutenant Commander.

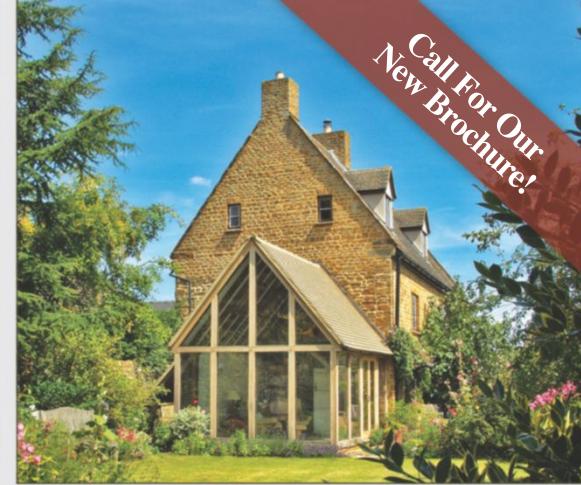
The *Forecast* was born of urgent need: an estimated 6,000 ships have been wrecked along the Cornish coastline. The first to coin the term 'weather forecast' was Vice-Admiral Robert FitzRoy, captain of Darwin's ship the *Beagle*. His predictions appeared daily in *The Times* from 1861.

In 2002, the BBC renamed Finisterre FitzRoy in his honour, the only shipping-forecast area named after a person. The others are named after sandbanks (six, including Dogger, Fisher and Bailey), estuaries (six), towns (Dover and Plymouth) and islands (10, with the Norwegian island Utsira divided north and south). Originally, there were 14 sea areas; greater precision means that there are 31 today. I can recommend this book warmly to addicted night owls.

*John McEwen*



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# Exhibition 'Beyond Caravaggio' at the National Gallery, London



The cropped figures and dramatic lighting in *The Denial of Saint Peter* (1615–20) emphasise the narrative drama of this scene from the gospels. The painting shows the debt to Caravaggio of the unknown artist nicknamed 'Pensionante del Saraceni'

*The National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin; The Wellington Collection, Apsley House, London/Historic England*

In one of his few recorded remarks about his art, Caravaggio declared that a good painter is one who 'knows how to paint well and imitate natural things well'. This simple, almost banal statement strikes at the heart of the revolutionary impact of Caravaggio's paintings. A realist, he sought to render the world without idealisation. As a result, it's little exaggeration to say that a generation of artists saw reality through his eyes.

The engrossing exhibition that opens this week at the National Gallery in London explores Caravaggio's influence on his contemporaries. Some are famous, such as Georges de la Tour and Jusepe de Ribera, many are known only to specialists. Conceived and curated by the Gallery's Curator of Italian art after 1600, Letizia Treves, the display brings

## In the light of the divine

Caravaggio's overwhelming impact on artists in the early 17th century makes for an enthralling exhibition at the National Gallery, writes Michael Hall

Caravaggio's achievement into a tight focus and allows us to appreciate the way that such outstanding painters as Gerrit van Honthorst or Orazio and Artemisia Gentileschi distilled his influence into something distinctive.

Caravaggio became famous overnight with the unveiling, in 1600, of his first public commission—canvases depicting

the Calling and Martyrdom of St Matthew, painted for the Contarelli chapel in the church of San Luigi dei Francesi in the centre of Rome. They are still there, attracting visitors by the coachload to wonder in particular at the heart-stopping drama that Caravaggio conjures up in the *Calling* from a shaft of light, as the Divine erupts into a humble room.

Caravaggio died in 1610, at the age of 38, after a career of barely 18 years, in which he produced between 80 and 90 paintings. Although he had assistants, he never ran a studio with pupils in the conventional sense. No drawings by him are known—he drew directly onto the canvas—nor did he make prints.

The reason he exerted an influence so quickly and powerfully was the fact that he worked in Rome, at the centre of the Italian art world, where rich patrons were abundant and where colonies of foreign artists, many only temporary residents, quickly spread Roman innovation throughout Europe. Most of the artists we think of as 'Caravagisti' had a direct connection with the artist, either by personal acquaintance or by studying his paintings in the churches and palaces of Rome.

Caravaggio's influence was evident throughout the 17th century, leaving an imprint on artists as varied as Velázquez, Murillo, Rubens and Rembrandt. The exhibition examines 'Caravagiasm' in a more focused manner, by examining the period from about 1600 to the late 1630s, when his style was at the height of public esteem. His reputation declined from the 1640s onwards, in the face of a resurgence of the belief that artists should refine and idealise the natural world.

Caravaggio came to be damned with faint praise as a realist whose art had proved a dead-end, a judgement that was not definitively reversed until the mid 20th century: the first monograph on him in English (by Roger Hinks) was published only in 1953.

Most of the paintings in the exhibition are from British collections—it will travel to Dublin and Edinburgh after being seen in London—so, in part, it functions as a document of the taste for Caravaggio's style in this country, a subject explored in the excellent catalogue (a proper catalogue for once and not just an accompanying book).

At its core are the National Gallery's three paintings by Caravaggio, which, usefully for the exhibition, are drawn from separate periods of his career. They are supplemented by three loans, which include the *Boy Peeling Fruit* from the Royal Collection—almost certainly Caravaggio's earliest surviving painting—and the dramatic *The Taking of Christ* from the National Gallery of Ireland.

These paintings form the reference point for the works by painters whom he influenced. The exhibition demonstrates the truth of what Caravaggio's biographer Giovan Pietro Bellori wrote in 1672, in words that Dr Treves quotes at the outset of the catalogue: younger artists 'vied with each other in following him, stripping their models and placing their light sources high; with no regard for study or teaching, each readily found his master in the piazza or on the street, the models to copy from nature'.



**A Musician** by 'Cecco del Caravaggio' shows the influence of his master's lighting and realism

This combination of intense realism with lighting from a single elevated source (suggesting a high window in a studio) is evident in works by Francesco Buoneri, the painter who was closest of all to Caravaggio. As his nickname, Cecco del Caravaggio, reveals, he was the artist's assistant, probably his model and, by repute, his lover, which may explain the enigmatic eroticism that his paintings share with his master, as well as his ability in still-life, little inferior to Caravaggio's own.

With such works as the paintings in the Contarelli chapel or the National Gallery's *Supper*

*at Emmaus*, Caravaggio imported the dramatic lighting and realism of these early-genre works, painted for private clients, into public religious paintings of great narrative clarity. The impact this had is demonstrated by such canvases as *The Denial of St Peter*, by an unknown artist, perhaps French, nicknamed by art historians 'Pensionante del Saraceni'—'Saraceni's lodger', from his evident closeness to the Venetian Caravaggist painter Carlo Saraceni.

This representation of a turning point in the Christian story as though it were an everyday domestic dispute demonstrates as powerfully as any work

by Caravaggio himself how his ability to 'imitate natural things well' was placed at the service of his faith.

*'Beyond Caravaggio'* is at the National Gallery, London WC2, until January 15, 2017. For more information and to book tickets, visit [www.nationalgallery.org.uk](http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk). 'Maino's Adorations: Heaven on Earth', a free display of two paintings by the Spanish Caravaggist Fray Juan Bautista Maino, on loan from the Prado, is at the National Gallery until January 29, 2017

**Next week:** Rose Hilton at Messum's, London



# Ecstasy created from the depths of despair

Geoffrey Smith wallows in the emotion of Schumann's feverish devotion and Tchaikovsky's unrequited love plus, on a lighter note, recommends a Shostakovich opera about a runaway nose

Robert Workman; Spunwick/Alamy Stock Photo; Granger Historical Picture Archive/Alamy Stock Photo; EPA European Pressphoto Agency/B.V./Alamy Stock Photo; Getty Images/Hirayuki Ito

IT'S said that music is the purest of the arts because it expresses only itself. Many people, however, feel that a composer's work is bound to reflect his life and personality. Devotees of Robert Schumann would certainly link the passionate originality of his music to the romantic intensity of his character, epitomised by his lengthy courtship of his adored Clara Wieck, despite the unyielding opposition of her father. The couple's marriage, in 1840, inspired one of the most extraordinary outpourings in the history of song, an *annus mirabilis* of creativity in which Schumann produced 140 *lieder* in a fever of devotion and love.

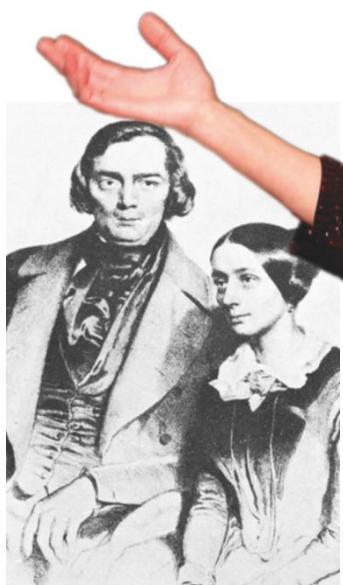
That remarkable sequence will be one of the glories of *The Schumann Project*, the Oxford Lieder Festival's lavish tribute to the composer, comprising all his songs as well as other music by him, his contemporaries, his revered master, Bach, and Clara



herself. Over a fortnight, a cast of eminent singers, including Christian Gerhaher, Sarah Connolly, Felicity Lott and Bo Skovhus, will trace the composer's life and art from the ecstasies of 1840 to the desolation of his final mental breakdown (October 14–29, 01865 591276; [www.oxfordlieder.co.uk](http://www.oxfordlieder.co.uk)).

Another composer whose creativity was inseparable from his inner turmoil was Tcha-

**A series of concerts at the Barbican explores Tchaikovsky's (above) relationship with Nadezhda von Meck**



**Left:** Robert Schumann with his wife, Clara Wieck. **Right:** Felicity Lott will appear at the Oxford Lieder Festival's Schumann tribute



kovsky and that conjunction fuelled the turbulent passion of his orchestral masterpieces. It's also the subject of *Beloved Friend: Tchaikovsky Project*, a set of concerts at the Barbican, London EC2 (October 16–28), exploring the effect of his relationship with Nadezhda von Meck, the wealthy patroness who supported him for 15 years in the prime of his artistic life. Her only condition was that they should never meet, but Tchaikovsky opened his heart to her in a long series of letters. When she abruptly broke off their arrangement, he was shattered.

*Beloved Friend* begins with a 'dramatised recital' written by Ronald Harwood, depicting their *affair-manque*, but the meat of the series is the three concerts given by Semyon Bychkov and the BBC Symphony Orchestra. Including the Second and Third Piano Concertos, with Kirill Gerstein, plus the *Manfred* symphony, it culminates in Tchaikovsky's tragic swan song, his Sixth symphony *Pathétique*, which had its premiere just over



**Feelings running high:** Nicholas Crawley (Masetto) and Mary Bevan (Zerlina) perform Mozart's *Don Giovanni* at the Coliseum

a week before his sudden death, sometimes attributed to suicide ([www.barbican.org.uk](http://www.barbican.org.uk); 020-7638 8891).

Given his obsessive temperament, it may seem somewhat paradoxical that Tchaikovsky's favourite composer was Mozart, the embodiment of music as an art sufficient to itself. No one could accuse Mozart of lacking emotions: rather, his genius encompasses them all, rendering every expressive shade and nuance, holding them all in a kind of ultimate understanding, a perspective that gives his music what Herman Hesse called its 'divine laugh', its spirit and sympathy.

No work better exemplifies Mozart's peerless breadth of feeling than *Don Giovanni*. It's notoriously hard to perform and I wish that English National Opera's new production conveyed more of its human variety. Director Richard Jones concentrates on the Don's monomaniacal lechery, filling the

stage with a nondescript array of doors and corridors, like a vast brothel, leading everywhere to clinical, soulless sex.

Though true to the Don, this prevailing mood inhibits the subtlety of the many-sided score and the interaction of the characters. Although the performances are fine—with Christopher Purves convincingly lurid in the title role and conductor Mark Wigglesworth setting an assured pace—Mozart only comes fully to life in Christine Rice's thrilling delivery of Donna Elvira's second-act lament.

*Don Giovanni* (until October 26) at the Coliseum, London WC2, runs in tandem with Puccini's *Tosca* (until December 3), Bizet's *The Pearl Fishers* (October 19–December 2) and a new production of Berg's *Lulu* (November 9–19, 020-7845 9300; [www.eno.org](http://www.eno.org)).

Opening next week, Covent Garden offers its first-ever staging of one of opera's distinct curiosities, Shostakovich's *The*

## What's new

**London Jazz Festival** From concert halls to pubs, clubs and churches, hosting stars and styles of all sorts, it kicks off with a gala celebration of the Jazz Voice at Royal Festival Hall. There are also such eminent attractions as the saxophone-piano duo of Joshua Redman and Brad Mehldau, Scandinavian icon Jan Garbarek, Britain's vocal queen Norma Winstone, celebrating her 75th birthday, and pianist Gwilym Simcock accompanying an Alfred Hitchcock silent film, with the legendary Wayne Shorter bringing the curtain down with his quartet (November 11–20, [www.efglondonjazzfestival.org.uk](http://www.efglondonjazzfestival.org.uk)).

## Book now

**Brighton Early Music Festival** In an exploration of Nature and science, Fretwork performs Bach's *The Art of Fugue* and The Society of Strange and Ancient Instruments evokes Francis Bacon (October 28–November 13, 01273 709709; [www.bremf.org.uk](http://www.bremf.org.uk)).

**Steve Reich at 80** The American composer is celebrated at the Barbican (November 5), with compositions including the European premiere of *Pulse*, written for the Britten Sinfonia; the programme is repeated in Saffron Walden, Essex, on November 6 and Bristol's Colston Hall on November 23 (020-7638 8891; [www.barbican.org.uk](http://www.barbican.org.uk)).

**Murray Perahia** The American pianist begins his cycle of all the Beethoven concertos with the Academy of St Martin in the Fields at the Barbican on November 21, with performances of the First in C and the Third in C minor (020-7638 8891; [www.barbican.org.uk](http://www.barbican.org.uk)).



## Last chance to see

**Sibelius symphonies** The London Philharmonic, under Osmo Vänskä, performs the much-anticipated cycle of all seven of the Finn's symphonies, plus concertos by British composers, at Royal Festival Hall, SE1 (October 19–28, 020-7960 4200; [www.southbankcentre.co.uk](http://www.southbankcentre.co.uk)).

## Give this a miss

**Dear Esther** I admit I'm probably not the natural audience for a videogame with live music, which will be played and performed with its original soundtrack at Milton Court, EC2, on October 14 (020-7638 8891; [www.barbican.org.uk](http://www.barbican.org.uk)).

*Nose* (October 20–November 9, 020-7304 4000; [www.roh.org.uk](http://www.roh.org.uk)). This is based on Gogol's satirically surreal tale of a nose that inexplicably leaves its owner's face and goes on the run in St Petersburg.

Written when the composer was only 21, it displays all the daring and confidence of the brilliantly talented prodigy who had yet to suffer the malign

effects of Stalinism, which would blight the works of his later years.

The award-winning Australian Barrie Kosky makes his Royal Opera directing debut; widely praised for his free-wheeling, innovative style and taste for flamboyance and fun, he's just the thing to recreate imperial St Petersburg in all its pomp, assisted by a large cast and Shostakovich's sparkling, audacious score.

# Crossword

A prize of £15 in book tokens will be awarded for the first correct solution opened. Solutions must reach Crossword No 4451, COUNTRY LIFE, Pinehurst II, Pinehurst Road, Farnborough Business Park, Farnborough, Hampshire GU14 7BF, by **Tuesday, October 18**. UK entrants only.

## ACROSS

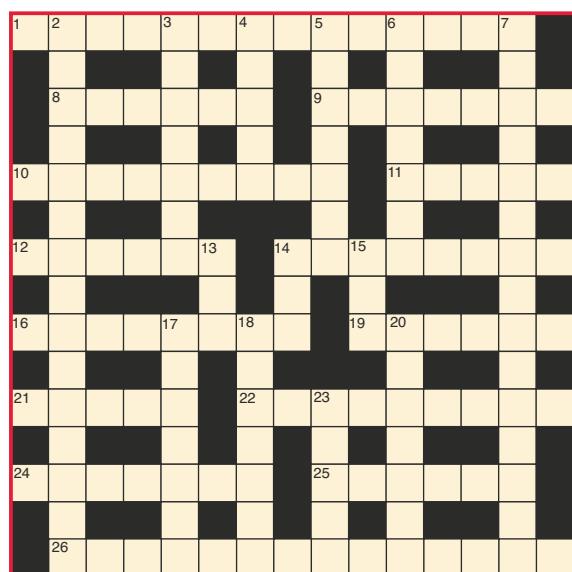
- Fool set about walking quickly when cynically selling parts of company (5, 9)
- Animal huge fan of tree (6)
- Fine to lubricate source of energy (3, 4)
- I rear gull attacked by soldier (9)
- Records strips of fabric (5)
- Leave during severe regression (6)
- Day cadet makes leaf store (3, 5)
- First marriage for politician (8)
- Rewrite leases for artists' implements (6)
- Duck cannon (5)
- Attitude of reserve to body (9)
- I take taxi back when unwell through bacteria (7)
- Formerly did when employed (4, 2)
- Programme of study for caterer? (8, 6)

## DOWN

- Spain guarantees residence for certain old people (15)
- Rues change to number of guaranteed employments (7)
- First to oversee try at lessening amount (5)
- Put aside exposure index that is behind time (7)
- Expedient that new pilot in charge (7)
- Longed to slice jolly tasty fruit (6, 9)
- Way to make a trip through banana skins (3)
- Add youngster (3)
- Hole in one card (3)
- Teased when want to be directed (7)
- I take military intelligence band to fish (7)
- Red coat woven in architectural style (3, 4)
- Sweep right into shrub (5)

**4451**

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**SOLUTION TO 4450 (Winner will be announced in two weeks' time)**  
ACROSS: 1, Successor; 5, Bigot; 8, Canasta; 10, Vitamin; 11, Northumbrian; 14, Beckon; 15, Redditch; 16, Shortest; 18, Nimble; 19, Safe-crackers; 23, Prophet; 24, Wastage; 25, Caper; 26, Cornfield.  
DOWN: 1, Second-best; 2, Contractor; 3, Swarm; 4, Reverse; 5, Bits and pieces; 6, Game; 7, Tent; 9, Schoolteacher; 12, Stabmate; 13, Sheephead; 15, Rut; 17, Sceptic; 20, Rower; 21, Epic; 22, Poop.

*Winner of 4448 is Montague Tope, Willingdon, East Sussex.*

# Bridge

Andrew Robson

MANY Elimination and Throw-ins require a surfeit of trumps in each hand—but not all. Watch our first East see all his safe exits being removed before the fatal throw-in.

## Dealer South Neither vulnerable

|              |
|--------------|
| ♠ Q 9 7 4 3  |
| ♥ K 2        |
| ♦ A K 4      |
| ♣ A 7 2      |
| ♠ —          |
| ♥ Q 9 5      |
| ♦ Q 10 7 5 2 |
| ♣ K Q 10 9 3 |
| ♠ J 5 2      |
| ♥ J 8 7 6 3  |
| ♦ 9 8        |
| ♣ 8 6 4      |
| ♠ A K 10 8 6 |
| ♥ A 10 4     |
| ♦ J 6 3      |
| ♣ J 5        |

with his Knave of Hearts. Twelve tricks and slam made.

Our second deal comes from Indonesia v Singapore.

## Dealer South Neither vulnerable

|              |
|--------------|
| ♠ Q 9 7 4 3  |
| ♥ K 2        |
| ♦ A K 4      |
| ♣ A 7 2      |
| ♠ —          |
| ♥ Q 9 5      |
| ♦ Q 10 7 5 2 |
| ♣ K Q 10 9 3 |
| ♠ J 5 2      |
| ♥ J 8 7 6 3  |
| ♦ 9 8        |
| ♣ 8 6 4      |
| ♠ A K 10 8 6 |
| ♥ A 10 4     |
| ♦ J 6 3      |
| ♣ J 5        |

South    West    North    East  
1♠(1)    2NT(2)    5♠(3)    Pass  
6♠    End

(1) I like to open One Notrump with these hands, to avoid the rebid problem.  
(2) Unusual, showing five-five in the two lowest unbid suits.  
(3) Bid Six with good trumps.

(1) 23+ points or a hand worth 23.  
(2) Doesn't let South's Two Club opener, nor the adverse vulnerability, put him off.  
(3) Partner will bid again.  
(4) Does let the adverse vulnerability put him off making a Four Diamond boost.  
(5) Showing a really great hand and seeking more information.  
(6) Some Heart tolerance, known to be tepid given his failure to support last time.  
(7) Loses patience.

West led the King of Clubs, the bidding and lead having told you that he began with five Clubs headed by King-Queen and five Diamonds headed by the Queen (he would hardly bid the Unusual Two Notrump with five rags in Diamonds). Win the Ace of Clubs and project ahead to a three-card ending in which you hold in hand Knave-small of Diamonds and the Knave of Clubs and dummy has King-small of Diamonds and a small Club. Whichever three cards West keeps will be fatal for him.

Draw trumps (West showing up void), then eliminate Hearts by cashing the King, crossing to the Ace and ruffing the ten. Next, cash the Ace of Diamonds (to pass the time of day).

Don't exit with a Club at this juncture, as West can simply lead another Club—so this is not a standard Elimination and Throw-in. Instead, lead dummy's last Spade to your hand and lead out your final Spade, a Strip Squeeze.

Declarer cashed the Queen of Hearts, then, leaving East's Knave outstanding, crossed to the ten of Spades and ruffed a second Diamond. He next overtook the Knave of Spades with the Queen and ruffed a third Diamond (with his last Heart). You'll note that all East's Diamonds have been removed—and declarer knew that from the bidding.

Declarer played out the Ace-King of Spades and East could choose his poison. If he ruffed, he'd have to lead from his Queen of Clubs. However, discarding (a Club) on the fourth Spade was no better, as declarer could simply cash the Ace-King of Clubs and leave East to score the last trick

West must reduce to three cards and has to keep two Diamonds or you'll score both your remaining Diamonds. Assuming West retains the Queen of Clubs, you exit with the Knave of Clubs and await his Diamond lead from Queen-ten, which you'll run to your Knave.

West may (should) throw the Queen of Clubs to keep the ten, in the hope that East holds the Knave. You'll flash that card at him and, again, 12 tricks and slam made.

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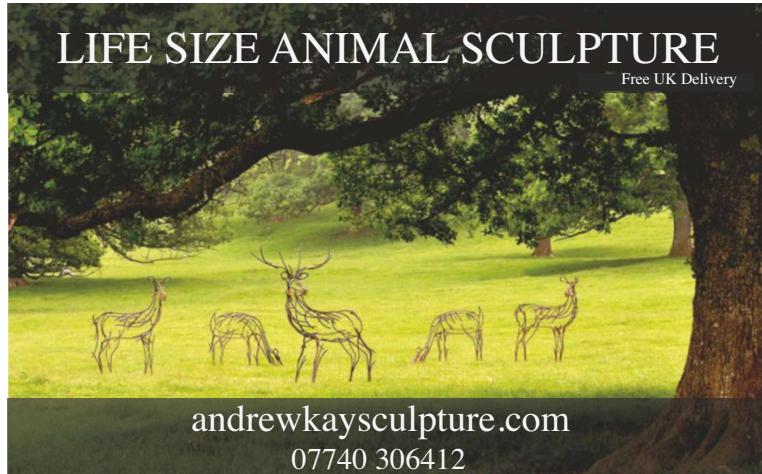
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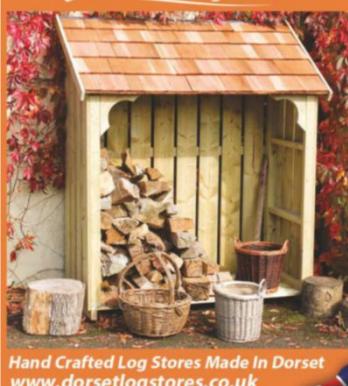
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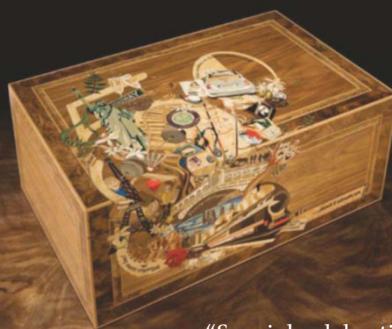
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| <b>AND 23S</b>  | BEY II0N | C42 LEY  | DAN 5    | ECC 13S  | GAY IE   | HEE 3R   | M4II ETT | M4II OYS | MOR 370N | SOP 3R   | SOR 47A  | VEG 5    |
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| <b>AUJ 73N</b>  | CEC IL   | DAY 70N  | EI VES   | 60 RGE   | GL66 SON | HOI2 OVD | LAU 23N  | MU57 ARD | I2 EED   | REG 555  | W41 SHE  | W41 SHE  |
| <b>BOV 3Y</b>   | C313 STE | DEE 2Y   | ERN 35T  | 3 VAN    | GOW 3R   | HOI2 ACE | LAW 21E  | NAJ 4T   | RI02 DAN | ROA 6H   | S72 EET  | W41 SHE  |
| <b>AUS 73N</b>  | CHA 73R  | DEI2 DRE | EVN 250N | F4 BRE   | GRA 58Y  | HOR 513Y | L3 GGE   | NOB 8S   | ROB 377A | ROS 377A | S72 OUD  | W41 SHE  |
| <b>BAL 1E</b>   | CHC 77IN | D3 NNE   | FEA 12N  | F2 ANC   | G234 VES | HOI IT   | LEN 70N  | NOG 4N   | ROB 7Y   | RUB 7Y   | SU54 NNA | W41 SHE  |
| <b>B428 OUR</b> | CLA 12K  | DEX 70N  | FII ESH  | FII 4R   | G23 GOR  | HOU IT   | MAR 71A  | OLW 7N   | ROB 7Y   | RUB 7Y   | TAM 3R   | W41 SHE  |
| <b>B42 LOW</b>  | COA 70N  | DII XON  | FI ESH   | GR13 VES | K4II SAR | KAU 53R  | MC45 AGE | ORM 320D | ROB 7Y   | RUB 7Y   | TER 335A | W41 SHE  |
| <b>BAS 537T</b> | COL 70N  | DOM 4N   | FOW I3R  | GII ARD  | KAU 53R  | KAU 53R  | MC64 RRY | OS13 ORN | ROB 7Y   | RUB 7Y   | TES 73R  | W41 SHE  |
| <b>B45 TOW</b>  | B206 DEN | DOO 13Y  | DOT 5    | GUN 73R  | K3I RON  | K3I RON  | MC66 RRY | P412 KES | ROB 7Y   | RUB 7Y   | T37 T    | W41 SHE  |
| <b>BAT 3S</b>   | 600 MBS  | DOV 3R   | FUII ANC | H46 KER  | KI5 ALL  | KI5 ALL  | MC67 RRY | PAR 70N  | ROB 7Y   | RUB 7Y   | THE 235E | W41 SHE  |
| <b>BAY 70N</b>  | COT 74M  | FUD 2N   | FUII FII | HAI 3D   | KII YON  | KII YON  | MC68 RRY | PAT 6H   | ROB 7Y   | RUB 7Y   | TOP 14M  | W41 SHE  |
| <b>BEA 6IE</b>  | COU 170N | FUD 2N   | GAI 4LES | HAI 3D   | KII YON  | KII YON  | MC69 RRY | PAT 70N  | ROB 7Y   | RUB 7Y   | TOY 4H   | W41 SHE  |
| <b>BEC 6K</b>   | COU 2T   | D2I VER  | GAR 237H | HAR 7E   | KES 50N  | KET 13Y  | MC70 RRY | PAT 70N  | ROB 7Y   | RUB 7Y   | TUR 13Y  | W41 SHE  |
| <b>BEE 6H</b>   | CRO 5H   | DUB IN   | GAR 237H | KET 13Y  | KET 13Y  | KET 13Y  | MC71 RRY | PAT 70N  | ROB 7Y   | RUB 7Y   | TUR 70N  | W41 SHE  |
| <b>BEE 3R</b>   | CRO 570N | DUN 570N | G421 AND | KET 13Y  | KET 13Y  | KET 13Y  | MC72 RRY | PAT 70N  | ROB 7Y   | RUB 7Y   | W537 LEY | W41 SHE  |

|               |        |        |        |            |         |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |
|---------------|--------|--------|--------|------------|---------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| <b>E 2</b>    | BSW 5  | 7 DHM  | 5 EF   | 200 EX     | FOT 2   | 2 HDD  | 9 HWE  | KGL 8  | LOX II | 837 MW | 2 NWJ  | 4 PPD  | 3 RN   | SU 5   | 2 VAD  | 9II WG |
| <b>FA 9</b>   | 16 BU  | 3 DJG  | EFJ II | 639 F      | I23 FR  | HE 3   | 1989 J | KJE 52 | LPK II | 2 MYC  | OAS II | PPW 3  | RND 5  | 30 TAJ | VBS 2  | WH 79  |
| <b>6 AHG</b>  | BV 8   | DL 12  | 8 EG   | 3 FCB      | FSC II  | 6 HEH  | 30 JBM | 848 KL | LS 8   | II NCP | P849   | 9 RO   | 2 TBT  | 2 VFS  | WHE 5  |        |
| <b>44 ASL</b> | BW 2   | 6 DN   | 3 EJN  | FCH 8      | 6 FTR   | 9 HEK  | 9II JD | KTK 9  | II LSB | NEO 2  | PAZ 2  | 79 PT  | RS 2   | TCL 5  | VG 2   | WMG 6  |
| <b>4 AVP</b>  | C 5    | DT II  | 8 EJR  | FD 5       | 5 FV    | 59 HGH | JHN 80 | 49 KTT | LSS 6  | NFA II | 2 PBK  | PTR 3I | RS 9   | TEW 47 | VGR 2  | WNC 2  |
| <b>BAW 2</b>  | CBS 7  | 9 DV   | 2 ENB  | FHD 1980 G | 18980 G | 38 HGB | KY II  | 87 LT  | 86 NJ  | 849 PG | 7 PU   | SCE IO | TFL 80 | VHB 3  | WJP 2  |        |
| <b>BBS 4</b>  | 2 CL   | 100 DY | 8 EPC  | 2 FHD      | 1980 R  | 37 II  | 9II GA | HJC II | 60 JU  | 86 NJ  | 849 PG | 7 PU   | SDS II | II THM | VPP 2  |        |
| <b>9 BCB</b>  | 7 CLE  | 525 E  | 800 ER | FHD II     | 2 GBO   | 2 GBO  | HJK 3  | JVG 8  | 2 LEF  | II LWP | 8 NMS  | II PHL | 9 PV   | SDS II | II THM | VPP 2  |
| <b>BG 72</b>  | CRJ II | E 2    | ERJ 4  | 70 FJ      | 24 GLN  | 36 HN  | JWC 74 | LAB 20 | MBS 63 | 86 NR  | 91 PIW | 4 PWK  | 7 TU   | TJN II | 78 VLL | WRR 9  |
| <b>44 BMR</b> | CSD 96 | 4 EAJ  | 6 ESH  | 3 FJ       | 3 GPA   | 96 HR  | 2 KCE  | LEF 7  | MES 94 | 4 NTE  | 65 PKJ | 8 R89  | 6 SHR  | 80 TN  | 5 VPL  | WTP 7  |
| <b>7 BN</b>   | 80 CU  | II ECJ | ESW 5  | 29 FK      | 6 GU    | 2 HTP  | 9 KDK  | HLF 5  | 241 MM | 5 PKP  | 4 RBW  | SNK II | 2 TTM  | 9 VS   | 2 YB   |        |
| <b>BPS 1</b>  | DDP 1  | EJF 3  | 6 ET   | 2 FNG      | 3 GV    | 8 HV   | 8 KF   | 88 LK  | 79 MPF | 5 PMO  | 5 PMO  | 70 RMS | 334 ST | 6 VA   | WFT II |        |

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# A Greek tragedy

**W**e had set aside four days to go away, without children, for the first time in many years. A short stay in the Lake District, we thought, or a city break to Liverpool. After flying about 1,630 miles overnight, we found ourselves in the Cyclades.

'Do you think everything's closed for the season?' I asked Zam as we wandered round deserted towns, looking for a room. Shutters were shut, taverna chairs piled in corners. 'I think everyone's asleep,' he said.

My watch said 6.30am; my internal clock was jangled. When we finally found some evidence of occupation—a pair of Crocs and an empty bottle of wine outside a door on the first floor of a B&B—we decided to wait for their owner, presumably asleep within.

He was from Texas and had been in residence for six weeks. His wife said that was two weeks too long and she couldn't wait to get home to see her washing machine. She said this with the same longing someone might have

for their family or dog. They told us where to find the owner: 'She's big, she'll be wearing black.' With this accurate description, we located our landlady, who was having breakfast further along the road.

The room had sea views and we gratefully accepted the bed, despite it having a footboard, which is usually a deal breaker. The next day, we checked out, leaving our landlady to a vociferous argument with a man about her tax bill—a conversation that was, for some reason, conducted in English.

'This is *Byzantine!*' we heard her shout as we headed for the car. I've never seen eyes turn so quickly from welcoming brown to flinty black. She was scary. The taxman thought so, too.

Zam was developing a proper cold, which he blamed on the two women he sat next to on the aeroplane, who had slept with towels over their heads, only lifting them to cough in his direction.

I sat next to a young couple. She said 'happy birthday' to him at midnight, but that didn't

make her any more likeable. She told him he couldn't have some of her water, that he should have brought his own, and she tilted the screen into which they were both plugged so that he couldn't see it without an awkward tilt of the neck. I envied her pillow. I wish I'd told him to ditch her.

‘Savlon is a talisman-like piece of kit’

In the row in front, there was another couple who hadn't known each other long—he was over-attentive and cracked jokes, at which she laughed politely. Her expression as we stood to leave the plane said, quite clearly, 'this is going to be a long week'.

My children would have told me to stop staring and eavesdropping, but they weren't there, which is also why I'd finished my book by the end of the first day. All most peculiar. But then things turned familiar,

when Zam realised he hadn't packed Savlon. He didn't need Savlon, but it's a talisman-like piece of kit without which he feels insecure. Also, he loves a foreign pharmacy.

There had been strikes on the ships, which meant no medicines had been delivered to the first two chemists we tried—they shook their heads sadly or, perhaps, uncomprehendingly. We went to a third, where Zam continued with the English in a foreign accent and where we bought a tube of something that looks very like Anusol, but probably isn't.

On our return, having fallen lock, stock and barrel in love with the place, I spoke to a friend who's moving to Greece for a year. So far, her only accommodation is a Romahome, which she declares to be 'no beauty, but cheap, damp-proof and reliable'.

I stared out of the window at our English October and wondered if I envy her. I do, a little bit. 'See you next year,' I said, 'and take some Savlon.'

## TOTTERING-BY-GENTLY

By Annie Tempest

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